A SKETCH ACCOUNT OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES IN THE CANADIAN MILITARY

by

John Moses

with
Donald Graves and
Warren Sinclair

National Défense
Defence nationale

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FOREWORD

The authors' work stands on its own merits, and needs no introduction, as, in every way, it is admirable; but when asked by Dr. Serge Bernier, the Director of History and Heritage, to write a foreword, I could not refuse.

I was deeply honoured and privileged to have been appointed the "Aboriginal Champion" for the Canadian Forces. Over the last three years, I have learned many things about their unique culture. Today, more than 1200 First Nations, Inuit and Métis Canadians serve with the Canadian Forces at home and overseas with the same fervour and pride as their ancestors. Their diversity is extraordinary. They represent over 640 distinct bands, sharing common beliefs and practices, and all unique in themselves. As well, there are 55 languages and distinct dialects that belong to 11 linguistic families.

The story of this singular society is like a chain stretching from the past into the future and formed with links of their experiences in both peace and war. I do not wish to attempt to tell over again the valiant history of Canada's Aboriginal peoples. What I think needs to be said is that it is imperative that the record of the loyal services of Aboriginal peoples be preserved for all time. We can only foster cross-cultural awareness through knowledge and understanding.

The Canadian Forces and the Department of National Defence recognize that diversity of cultures is an important part of our defence team. It is incumbent on all Canadian Forces members to promote a common understanding and a healthy and respectful work environment amongst Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. The Canadian Forces must be a place where all peoples can serve with honour.

To my great pleasure I learn that this account is a work in progress. There are many stories and events left to be told. I invite everyone to read this account and to continue to view this site for future updates. I know you will find it both interesting and informative.

J. M. C. Couture,
Lieutenant-General

Ottawa, ON. , October 2003

INTRODUCTION

THE FAME OF ANCIENT WARRIORS

The Aboriginal Peoples and Their Way of War

When European explorers "discovered" North America in the sixteenth century they found it already inhabited by an indigenous population. Residing in the territory of what would eventually become the modern nation of Canada were a variety of aboriginal peoples who had been on the continent for at least 12,000 years and possibly much longer.

From the Atlantic seaboard to the Pacific, ethnologists have identified major cultural and linguistic aboriginal groups at the point of first European contact as the Beothuks in Newfoundland and Labrador; the Micmaq, Maliseet and Abenaki in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick; the Montagnais and Cree in northern Quebec and Ontario; and the Algonkin, Hurons, Iroquois, Ojibwa, Petun, Tobacco and Neutral along the St. Lawrence and in southern Ontario. Farther west, the plains Cree inhabited what is now modern Manitoba while the Assiniboine, Blackfoot, Gros Ventres, and Sarcee roamed the plains as far as the Rockies. On the western side of the great mountain range were the Pacific peoples, the Haida, Kwakiutl, Nootka, Salish, and Tsimshin, while the northern reaches were the home of the Athabaskan peoples and the Inuit, whom the French called *esquimaux*.

To a certain extent, however, these groupings are an artificial delineation. Perhaps the best way to differentiate the Aboriginal peoples of Canada prior to their first European contact is to define them by their environments and the lifestyles and cultures they developed. By this measuring stick, the Inuit culture was in the north, the Pacific culture on the west coast, the Plains culture on the prairies while the remainder of what was to become modern Canada was the home of the Eastern Woodland culture which can be subdivided into two major groups – nomads who moved about on an annual basis and sedentary peoples who tended to reside at fixed locations. The Eastern Woodland nations, the largest group in terms of numbers and the most powerful in terms of military prowess, were to play a major role in the early history of Canada.

Contrary to the myth that prior to the arrival of the Europeans these Aboriginal peoples lived in a blessed state of perpetual peace, warfare was central to their way of life. There were continuous conflicts or feuds between major groups, subgroups and even kin groups, induced by complex and intertwined causes: to acquire prestige and power, to demonstrate courage, to gain or defend territory, to exact tribute or control trade, spiritual matters and, most commonly, to avenge real or imagined wrongs. These conflicts were essentially a matter of raids and ambushes. Mutual aggression would escalate until an uneasy peace or some violent solution brought hostilities to a close.

Although women played major social and political roles in the Eastern Woodland culture, warfare was a predominantly male occupation and boys learned the necessary skills at an early age because they were identical to those required for hunting. The object was not so much to kill the enemy as to take captives with as few casualties as possible, and aboriginal warfare was neither as prolonged nor perhaps as bloody as its European equivalent.

Tactics were based on an impressive individual self-discipline grounded on personal honour rather than fear of punishment. War chiefs or leaders, who normally differed from peacetime chiefs, were selected on the grounds of experience and courage and their record of preserving lives on campaign. There was no disgrace in retreating to await a more favourable moment – the aim was to accomplish the objective with as few casualties as possible. War chiefs trained their subordinates to move fast in small groups, re-assemble at the critical time, take every advantage of ground, and to surround the enemy while avoiding being surrounded. Such tactics saved lives but were often misunderstood by European observers, although one perceptive historian of North American warfare has remarked, "Is it not the best discipline that has the greatest tendency to annoy the enemy and save their own men?"

The warrior's credo of moving fast and light, striking when and where least expected, and withdrawing before a counterattack could be mounted – the essence of guerilla warfare – was enhanced by his impressive physical endurance, nurtured from an early age by his participation in hunting. For a limited time, war parties could cover fifty or sixty kilometres a day on little or no food, although care was usually taken to prepare or procure provisions before setting out. Mobility was the key and warriors moved easily on water, paddling lightweight canoes, or over winter terrain using snowshoes. One commentator has concluded that they were born soldiers who "possessed the skills and discipline of modern commandos and special forces, ... who were capable of adapting to whatever situation they encountered."

Aboriginal and European warfare differed markedly. Europeans, with concepts based on the rigid discipline required to turn civilians into soldiers who would fight in the open and in unyielding lines, regarded Aboriginal tactics as "skulking" warfare. Major Robert Rogers, the famous Ranger commander who successfully adopted many of those same tactics in the mid-eighteenth century, summed up the white view. His opponents had:

> ... no stated rules of discipline, or fixed methods of prosecuting a war; they make attacks in as many different ways as there are occasions on which they make them, but generally in a very secret skulking, underhand manner, in flying parties that are equipped for the purpose, with thin light dress, generally consisting of nothing more than a shirt, stockings and mogasins, sometimes almost naked.

For his part, Makataimeshekiakiak, or Black Hawk, a war chief of the Sauk who fought in the War of 1812, was sceptical of white military leaders and their methods.

> Instead of stealing upon each other, and taking every advantage to kill the enemy and save their own people, as we do, (which, with us, is considered good policy in a war chief) they march out, in open daylight, and fight, regardless of the number of warriors they may lose! After the battle is over, they retire to feast, and drink wine, as if nothing had happened; after which, they make a statement in writing, of what they have done – each party claiming the victory! and neither give an account of half the number that have been killed on their own side. They all fought like braves, but would not do to lead a war party with us. Our maxim is, "to kill the enemy and save our own men." Those [white] chiefs would do to paddle a canoe, but not to steer it.

At the time of first European contact the Eastern Woodland warrior's major offensive weapon was the bow, between five and six feet long, capable of firing an arrow more than 150 metres but only truly effective at a much shorter range. He was taught to close in on the enemy and then let loose a series of arrows before his opponent had time to react. At short ranges, even with a stone or bone arrowhead, the effect could be devastating – in 1606 a French sailor was killed by an arrow which pinned his small dog to his body! For hand-to-hand fighting, warriors favoured a wooden club or an axe with a stone head, and many equipped themselves with shields or armour made from wood or bark, which were proof against stone arrowheads at all but the closest ranges. One similarity they did share with their white counterparts was the use of adornment to signify rank or prowess – Iroquoian war chiefs and warriors, for example, painted their shields and breastplates with heraldic and personal symbols and war chiefs often wore elaborate feather insignia on their headgear as a sign of their rank.

Some of the Eastern Woodland nations, notably the Iroquoian peoples, resided in permanent villages fortified with wooden palisades, and assaults were rarely made on such defended localities because of the heavy casualties that inevitably ensued. Occasionally, however, two warring groups might fight pitched battles in the open. Such an engagement would commence with the shouting of threats and boasts, followed by a mutual exchange of missiles, and culminate with hand-to-hand conflict using clubs and axes. Once the close-quarter fighting started, it was impossible for war chiefs to control their subordinates, and the struggle resolved itself into a series of individual combats between warriors which continued until one side prevailed and the other fled or surrendered.

Some aspects of Aboriginal warfare shocked Europeans. It was not uncommon for prisoners to be ritually tortured and, in some cases, for their captors to eat the hearts or other body parts of opponents whom they considered to be particularly courageous. Scalping, the removal of part of the hair and scalp was a very old custom that originated before the arrival of the first Europeans. As early as 1535, a French sailor at Hochelaga (near modern Montreal) noted five scalps displayed in the village. Much was made of this gruesome aspect of aboriginal life in the literature of the early European explorers and settlers but it was not long before competing white colonies were offering rewards to their Native allies for the scalps of their white enemies. As in so much to do with pre-contact and early contact aboriginal life, Europeans exaggerated aboriginal cruelty, without also noting that many prisoners were spared and adopted by their captors to replace casualties suffered in battle.

CHAPTER 1

THE COMING OF THE EUROPEANS

Early Contact

As far as we know, the first Europeans to reach North America were Norsemen – Vikings – venturing from their colonies in Greenland. After several exploratory voyages, some 160 people in four ships, together with a variety of domestic animals, established a hamlet at Straumfiord (today, L'Anse aux Meadows) close to the tip of Newfoundland's Burin peninsula, in 1003 or 1004. One or two years later, a second community was briefly located further south, on or near present-day St. Paul's Bay. However, both settlements met ferocious opposition from the indigenous population, whom they called *skraelings*, and neither proved viable. The settlers' numbers were few and they could not endure the casualties resulting from this internecine conflict. In 1006 or 1007 the dejected survivors abandoned their attempts at colonization, although adventurous souls continued to sail to North America and haul back timber to treeless Greenland for another century or two, until the Greenland colonies also failed.

From the late-fifteenth century on, English, French and Portuguese explorers searching for new routes to the fabled riches of the Orient, began to explore the Atlantic coast of present-day Canada. In 1497 John Cabot claimed Newfoundland for England, and he was followed in 1534 by Jacques Cartier who explored the Gulf of the St. Lawrence on the behalf of France. Cartier's men traded for furs with the Micmaq people at Chaleur Bay and penetrated the Gaspé where they encountered an Iroquoian party led by Donnacona, a chief. Cartier set a bad example when he kidnapped two of Donnacona's sons and took them back to France.

He returned the following year to ascend the St. Lawrence as far as Hochelaga, and this time he abducted Donnacona himself to act as a guide for future voyages. Since Donnacona died while in captivity, Cartier's behaviour did nothing to develop cordial relations between whites and Aboriginals. French attempts to establish a permanent settlement at Quebec in 1541-1543 were defeated by a combination of climate, scurvy and, above all, the hostility of the St. Lawrence Iroquoian peoples. Other explorers had no better success. In 1577-1578 the Englishman, Martin Frobisher, fought pitched battles with the Inuit when he sailed the coast of Labrador in search of a north-west passage.

But the tide of European exploration and settlement, impelled not only by lust for gold but also an increasing awareness of the natural wealth of Canada in terms of fish and furs, was just beginning. In the last half of the sixteenth century Basque fishermen, drawn by the marine life of the Grand Banks, created seasonal settlements at Red Bay on the coast of Labrador, and they were followed by the French Sieur de Monts who tried to establish trading posts in the Bay of Fundy and at Quebec but was driven off by rival English colonists. In 1608, the first permanent European settlement in Canada was founded at Quebec City by Samuel de Champlain, a Frenchman, and in the two following decades, England, Holland and Sweden established colonies along the Atlantic seaboard. Even at this early period, two factors were apparent: national rivalries in Europe spilled over into North America and Canada's fur trade was a more profitable enterprise than chasing dreams of the north-west passage.

A thriving fur trade was already being carried on between French sailors and Natives. At this time the St. Lawrence valley may have been dominated by the Mohawks, a member of the Iroquois League of Five Nations which resided between the Hudson and Genesee rivers of what is now New York state. The Hurons, another Iroquoian people but a nation loosely allied with the Algonkian language group Abenaki, Algonkin and Montaignais peoples, were anxious to obtain the lucrative position of middlemen in a burgeoning commercial enterprise by which furs were exchanged for iron pots, knives, axes and arrow heads, as well as beads, mirrors and cloth. The Hurons persuaded Champlain to intervene on their side against the Mohawks and he and his men participated in a number of expeditions in which the surprise effect and hitting power of his matchlock muskets enabled the Hurons to defeat their enemies. Frustrated, the Mohawks opened up a new trading channel with the Dutch along the lower Hudson river, but as the fur trade expanded and flourished they watched with envy the increasing wealth of the Hurons who served as middlemen between the French settlements along the St. Lawrence and the Algonkian peoples of the Upper Great Lakes.

The increasing numbers of Europeans coming to North America brought two terrible innovations, certain diseases and firearms, that had a drastic effect on the social and political stability of the Eastern Woodland people. Between 1634 and 1650, about half of the population of the Great Lakes basin died from European diseases. They were particularly fatal to the elderly and the young and thus removed experience from Aboriginal leadership at the very time it was most needed, leading to political instability while, at the same time, reducing the size of future generations. It has been estimated that in the four decades after the establishment of Quebec both the Huron Confederacy and the Iroquois League lost nearly half their population to these terrible scourges.

European weapons were not as dangerous as European diseases, but since those that possessed them had a tremendous advantage over any rivals – they had a greater effective range and required less skill to use effectively – they were much sought after. The newcomers were at first reluctant to trade firearms, but gradually commercial rivalry led to both the Iroquoian and Algonkian peoples obtaining muskets in large numbers. The Iroquois League, with good trade links both to the Dutch at Albany and the English in New England, both of whom provided better quality weapons than the French, soon possessed a significant amount of firepower.

Nearly a Half Century of War: France versus the Iroquois League

The fatal combination of commercial rivalry and political instability created by the fur trade, European colonization, and disease boiled over in the early 1640s, when the five-nation Iroquois League, consisting of the Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga and Seneca, began a series of attacks on the Hurons and their Algonkian allies that some ethnologists have termed the "Beaver Wars." The League's major objective was to obtain control of the rich fur territories in central and northern Ontario and replace the Hurons in the profitable position of middlemen. This conflict took the form of a decade-long series of Iroquois raids, of ever increasing intensity, into Huron and Algonkian territory. By 1650 the League controlled much of what is now Ontario and western New York. Huronia, the homeland of the Huron people in central Ontario was devastated and the survivors fled to live as refugees with other nations.

It was inevitable that the infant colony of New France would be drawn into this struggle. Before embarking on their mission of conquest, the Iroquois had tried to secure French neutrality, but when that proved impossible they began to attack the French settlements at Ville Marie (Montreal), Trois Rivières and Sorel. The French were shocked by the number of firearms the Iroquois possessed and their ability to use them. With parity in weapons (except artillery) and superiority in numbers, the advantage clearly lay on the side of the Iroquois and they came perilously close to overrunning New France. There was a brief peace in 1653, which both sides knew would not last and hostilities were then renewed.

Less than five years later, New France was in a perpetual state of siege. Outlying farmsteads were abandoned in favour of fortified villages, every *habitation* was loop-holed and the fur trade came to a virtual standstill. Heroic last stands, such as the famous defence of the Long Sault by Dollard des Ormeaux in 1660 did nothing to turn back the Iroquois onslaught and the infant colony began to wither. In that year, while the New England population numbered 90,000 and New Holland on the Hudson nearly 10,000, New France had only 3,500 very frightened people, guarded by less than fifty professional soldiers, huddled inside the palisades of its dozen or so straggling villages while Iroquois war parties mustering as many as four hundred warriors prowled outside.

Drastic steps had to be taken for New France to survive – and they were. In 1665, after a decade of continuous requests for an increased military garrison, King Louis XIV of France dispatched 1,300 veteran regular troops to North America. They arrived in June of that year and began to improve the defences of the threatened community by constructing a chain of forts to block the Richelieu River, the traditional highway of Iroquois raiding parties from the Mohawk valley. In January 1666, in an audacious move considering it was the dead of winter, a French expedition set out from Montreal to attack the Iroquois homeland in the Finger Lakes area; but the invaders were thwarted by the weather and the discovery that the former Dutch colony of New Holland was now the English colony of New York. The English did not approve of major French troop movements so near their territory.

The following September, however, a force of 1,100 French troops and colonists attacked the Iroquois homeland, burned four large villages and destroyed all the crops they could find. The League, faced with widespread starvation, wisely decided to make peace and, after protracted negotiations, a treaty was signed in July 1667. This peace gave much needed breathing space to both opponents. For their part, the Iroquois created an alliance with the English by transforming an understanding originally made between the Mohawks and the Dutch into a more significant agreement between the League and the English colony of New York. This alliance was symbolized by the "Silver Covenant Chain of Friendship," which was to be the foundation of British and Iroquois military alliances for more than a century.

For New France, relieved from the threat of extinction, the next two decades saw the colony prosper and its population increase. By the 1680s French influence was spreading throughout the Great Lakes basin and into the Ohio river valley. This development was viewed with increasing suspicion by the Iroquois, and in the 1680s war again erupted between the League and New France, a war that was to continue, sporadically, for nearly two decades.

During its early stages, the Iroquois League won some successes – notably when they compelled a strong force under the governor of New France, La Barre, to agree to a humiliating withdrawal at Cataraqui (Kingston) in 1682, but by and large, the conflict did not go well for them.

The military power of New France was considerably greater than it had been in the 1660s and *les Canadiens*, as the native-born population of New France were beginning to call themselves, had begun to master aboriginal methods of warfare. Still worse for the Iroquois, their Aboriginal neighbours began to push against the borders of their over-extended territory and they were gradually forced back to their homelands south of Lake Ontario. In 1687 La Barre's replacement, Denonville, moved into Iroquoia with a force of 2,000, including Aboriginal allies, and destroyed villages and crops.

At this point, the outlook was grim for the League but, when France and England went to war and the regional conflict in North America became part of a larger struggle, the Iroquois, with the active support of the English colonies, again seriously threatened the existence of New France. However, Denonville's successor, Frontenac, was an aggressive soldier who not only fought off an English attack on Quebec in 1690 but also launched major expeditions against the Iroquois homelands. By 1697, when peace was concluded between France and England, the League, battered and weary, realized it could no longer expect material support from the English colonies, and sued for peace. Again, the negotiations were protracted – in fact, for nearly four years – but, in July 1701, representatives from the League and forty Aboriginal nations stretching from Acadia to the Missouri River came together at Montreal to negotiate a major treaty.

The importance of this document, commonly known as the "Great Peace of Montreal," has been overlooked by many historians, who tend to emphasize European treaties as the major waypoints of Canadian history in the colonial period. The Iroquois promised to remain neutral in any future conflict between France and England, while by recognizing the nominal independence of the Aboriginal peoples, the French gained powerful allies against the rival English colonies along the Atlantic seaboard. The goodwill brought about by the Great Peace in 1701 was to guarantee the survival of French Canada for nearly six decades.

The End of the French Regime, 1701-1763

The half century that followed the Great Peace saw France expand its American possessions into a vast empire based on the St. Lawrence River, the great water route to the interior. By the time that the Seven Years' War began in 1756, French-controlled territory stretched from Cape Breton Island to what is now modern Saskatchewan, and from the Great Lakes down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico. This achievement was all the more remarkable because the competing English (after 1707, British) settlements possessed ten times the population of New France and its attendant colonies.

In the face of such overwhelming superiority of numbers, the survival of New France depended on the development of tactics that were a blend of European and Aboriginal practice. While the major centres of population were guarded by garrisons of French regulars and traditional fortifications, offensive operations were carried out by small raiding parties, usually composed of a mixture of regulars, *Canadien* militiamen and Aboriginal allies. Their tactics, developed by leaders such as Jean-Baptiste Hertel de Rouville and Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville proved very effective, while the British response, based on large military and naval expeditions of the European type, was not nearly as successful. Major attacks on Quebec in 1690 and 1711 were rebuffed and, although the French fortress of Louisbourg, which controlled the mouth of the St. Lawrence fell to a combined force of New England militia and Royal Navy warships in 1745 – British seapower was the key component – it was returned to France by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1749.

A major feature of the successful defence of French North America was the participation of the Native peoples residing within the French sphere of influence in the St. Lawrence valley. Generally known as the Seven Nations of Canada, these were Iroquoian and Algonkian peoples who lived in the Christian mission settlements of Akwesasne (St. Regis), Becancour, Kahnawake or Caughnawaga (Sault Saint-Louis), Kanesetake (Oka or Lac des deux Montagnes), Lorette (near Quebec), Odanak (St. François), Oswegatchie (La Présentation, modern Ogdensburg, New York). Closely intertwined with their British allies, the Seven Nations prospered during this period as suppliers of provisions to the European communities, participants and middlemen in the fur trade and as guides and military partners in time of conflict. Their assistance was essential, as was that of the Aboriginal peoples of the west, during the long struggle the French waged between 1711 and 1736 against the ferocious Fox nation who resided in what is now Wisconsin.

The defeat of the Foxes led inevitably to the extension of French settlements into the valley of the Ohio river. The result was a new source of tension as both France and Britain claimed the valley. When fighting broke out between the French and their Aboriginal allies and American colonial militia, it triggered a global conflict. In the opening stages of what later became known as the Seven Years' War, the French were largely victorious. In July 1755 nearly a thousand French and Aboriginal soldiers, including a contingent of about 230 warriors from the Seven Nations, inflicted a major defeat on a superior force of British regulars and colonial militia at the battle of the Monongahela, a victory largely won by the warriors. Success on the Monongahela guaranteed French possession of the Ohio country, and for the next three years the frontier settlements of Virginia and Pennsylvania were subjected to a series of raids by Aboriginal war parties allied with France. With the assistance of these same allies, the French were also able to establish control of both Lake Champlain and Lake Ontario through victorious expeditions against Oswego in 1756 and Fort William Henry in 1757.

Thereafter, however, the tide began to turn. British prime minister William Pitt decided to concentrate his nation's major military effort on North America. With the superiority of the Royal Navy at sea, British troops flooded into the continent and military operations became larger in terms of scope and, increasingly, more European in aspect, revolving around the attack and defence of fortified centres by large regular armies. A British offensive down the Lake Champlain corridor came to grief at Ticonderoga in July 1758, although that same summer an amphibious expedition captured Louisbourg, the guardian of the St. Lawrence, for a second time. That victory left the way open for an attack on Quebec and, in June 1759, a massive amphibious expedition involving hundreds of warships and transports and 25,000 regular soldiers and sailors arrived before the walls of the capital of New France to begin the siege that would culminate, three months later, in the surrender of the city.

That same year, British expeditions captured the important French post at Fort Niagara, retook Oswego, and broke French power in the Ohio valley. Although the Native allies of both powers participated in these later campaigns (more than a thousand warriors helped to defend Quebec in the summer of 1759), their role was less important than formerly as military operations were largely conducted along European lines.

Inevitably, the arrival of large numbers of European troops brought a new wave of disease which devastated the Aboriginal population. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, died from smallpox, which had a particularly devastating effect on women and children and, ironically, led to an increased preference for adopting prisoners as a way of replacing casualties, rather than killing them.

As the tide of war swung inexorably against France, the nations of the Ohio valley made a separate peace with Britain, although the Seven Nations of Canada continued to fight on until September 1760 when three large British armies converged on Montreal to overwhelm the defenders. Three years later, the war formally ended with the Treaty of Paris and the cession of all French colonies in North America (with the exception of Louisiana and the little islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, near Newfoundland), to the British Crown.

New Conflicts – the Pontiac Rebellion and the American Revolutionary War

Unfortunately for Britain and all the Aboriginal peoples, victory in the Seven Years' War did not lead to prolonged peace in North America. British authorities, anxious to obtain the goodwill of the Seven Nations of Canada during the difficult period of transition, permitted them to return to their homes without penalty, but the western nations allied with France were treated less generously, which led to increasing resentment on their part. As one of the western chiefs explained to his British counterpart:

> ... although you have conquered the French, you have not yet conquered us! We are not your slaves. These lakes, these woods, and mountains, were left to us by our ancestors. They are our inheritance; and we will part with them to none. Your nation supposes that we, like the white people, cannot live without bread – and pork – and beef! But you ought to know, that He, the Great Spirit and Master of Life, had provided food for use, in these spacious lakes, and on these woody mountains.

Sir William Johnson, the superintendent of the Indian Department, the Crown agency created in 1755 to manage Aboriginal affairs in British North America, was aware of this resentment. He warned Major-General Sir Jefferey Amherst, the British commander-in-chief, but Amherst, determined to reduce expenditure in North America, stopped the traditional practice of giving gifts, as it was not his intention "to gain the friendship of Indians by presents." Moreover, he calculated that a scarcity of supplies and ammunition among the western nations would be the best way to keep them quiet. By the spring of 1763, there were widespread rumours and reports that Britain's traditional allies were planning an offensive against British frontier posts.

These rumours were true. The so-called Pontiac Rebellion of 1763 was yet another in a series of struggles by an increasingly desperate Aboriginal people to preserve both their territory, independence and culture against the pressure of white intrusion. In May an alliance of western nations, led by the Ottawa chief, Pontiac, among others, invested all the forts and posts along the Detroit River. Some of them fell, but others held out long enough for relief expeditions to reach them and the power of Pontiac's alliance was gradually dissipated. Johnson, a resident of northern New York and connected by marriage with the leadership of the Iroquois League of Six Nations (the Tuscarora people having joined the League in the 1720s), was able to conclude peace and restore the traditional distribution of presents.

The removal of the French threat, together with population pressure, led to a westward extension of white settlement in the decade that followed. In an attempt to re-establish the new boundaries of the various British possessions in North America, and to stop unauthorized white settlement on aboriginal territory, in 1763 the Crown issued a Royal Proclamation which established the new colony of Quebec that included much of the modern provinces of Quebec and Ontario. A subsequent treaty, signed at Fort Stanwix in 1768, established a line from Oneida Lake, in northern New York, southward to the Pennsylvania border and then southwest, to and along the Ohio river, as the boundary between whites and Aboriginals.

These measures, intended to protect the nations of the Great Lakes and provide for a peaceful expansion of the frontier, angered the neighbouring American colonies which regarded them as an arbitrary attempt by the Mother Country to limit their westward expansion. This resentment, coupled with increased taxation imposed to defray the cost of defending the colonies, resulted in widespread civil unrest in the 1770s. As the thirteen American colonies moved toward an outright breach with the British (which occurred at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts in 1775), both sides made efforts to recruit the Aboriginal peoples as allies.

These efforts were directed largely toward the Iroquois League. Although the League attempted to remain neutral, it was inevitably dragged into the conflict and aboriginal military power in the Great Lakes area became a major consideration for British military leaders in the northern theatre of the American Revolutionary War of 1775-1783. Warriors from the Iroquois League and the Seven Nations of Canada were instrumental in delaying a rebel offensive against a weakly-defended Canada in the autumn of 1775, forcing the Americans to prolong their campaign over the winter and ultimately to face defeat at the gates of Quebec City. In the summer of 1777, a force of British regulars, Loyalists and warriors won a notable success at the battle of Oriskany but the Aboriginal peoples were less useful in assisting the doomed offensive led by Major-General John Burgoyne up the Champlain Valley that autumn.

Burgoyne's defeat and surrender at Saratoga brought France into the war on the side of the rebellious colonies and the conflict now broadened into a general European war. For the next five years, Britain's aboriginal allies, led by the Mohawk chief Thayandenaga, or Joseph Brant, participated in a series of campaigns and raids against the border settlements of New York and Pennsylvania, with little quarter given on either side. Although the focus of the conventional war shifted to the south in 1780, Britain's allies won two of their most notable successes – Sandusky and Blue Licks – after the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1781. But the Aboriginal peoples also suffered fearsome losses. The homelands of the Iroquois League were devastated by an American punitive campaign in 1779, and perhaps the worst depredation on either side was the murder by American troops of more than a hundred Christian Delaware men, women and children at the Gnadehutten massacre of 1782.

Undefeated, Brant and his warriors were appalled to learn of the terms of the 1783 Treaty of Paris which ended the war and established a new international border between Britain's North American possessions and her former colonies. Negotiated in Europe by European and American statesmen, this treaty did not include a single reference to the Aboriginal nations who had participated in the conflict, although it ceded the lands of those who had been allied with Britain to the new American republic. As an officer of the Indian Department reported to London, the Indians rightfully felt betrayed by the terms of the treaty. They:

> ... look upon our conduct to them as treacherous and cruel: they told me they never could believe that our King could pretend to cede to America what was not his own to give .... they would defend their own Just Rights or perish in the attempt to the last man, they were but a handful of small People but they would die like men, which they thought preferable to misery and distress if deprived of their Hunting Grounds.

This resentment was so strong that for a considerable period after 1783 there was fear among British authorities that they would be attacked by their former allies; but, fortunately for Canada, the Americans treated their unwilling new subjects so poorly that despite their betrayal they gradually returned to their traditional allegiance.

Land in Canada and financial compensation was offered to the Iroquois Loyalists, as it was to white Loyalists. Brant, the Mohawk war chief and Tekarihogen, the peace chief, led 1,800 Mohawks, Cayuga and other native peoples to a large tract of land on the Grand River north of Lake Erie while John Deserontyon established a smaller and separate Mohawk community at Tyendinaga on Lake Ontario's Bay of Quinte. John Graves Simcoe, the governor of the new colony of Upper Canada, which was created in 1791 and evolved into the modern province of Ontario, hoped that these new settlements would provide an active barrier against possible American aggression from the south.

Trouble in the Northwest, 1783-1794

Some of the Aboriginal peoples who had been allied with Britain elected to remain in the new republic, a choice many came to regret because, as soon as the restraints imposed by the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the Treaty of Fort Stanwix of 1768 were removed, the attitude of the American government was that those nations who had fought for Britain during the war were conquered peoples and their territory was forfeit. They imposed severe treaties on the Iroquois still resident in the United States, forcing them off their traditional land onto reservations. Ironically, the worst sufferers were the Oneida and Tuscaroras who had supported the Americans during the war.

The Americans had less luck with the Algonkian and Iroquoian peoples in the Ohio valley, who, being more distant from the centres of white population and more united in the defence of their territory, refused to accept any change in the boundary of the Ohio river, established in the 1760s. These nations of the Northwest (the modern states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio) formed a new confederacy which they called "The United Indian Nations" to defend their land. The infant American government, caught between a flood tide of settlers who wanted to move into the Ohio area and the intractability of the Aboriginals who wished to preserve that river as their boundary, was forced into military action after the Confederacy attacked illegal settlements on their own side of the river.

In September 1790, Brigadier-General Josiah Harmar was ordered "to extirpate, if possible," the attackers and set out from Fort Washington (modern Cincinnati) with 1,400 regulars and militia to invade the Miami nation. Within three weeks, having suffered more than two hundred casualties, he was back at his base, with nothing accomplished but the burning of a few abandoned villages.

American hopes for a quick victory were shattered. As one congressman put it: "a horid Savage war Stairs us in the face" as, instead of being humbled by the Harmar expedition, the Confederacy "appear ditermined on a general War."

In the early summer of 1791, Major-General Arthur St. Clair assembled a larger force, consisting of 1500 regulars and 800 militia, but was forced to delay his advance while he trained an army consisting of largely green recruits whom one of his staff characterized as "the offscourings of large Towns and Cities; – enervated by Idleness, Debaucheries and every species of Vice." It was not until September that St. Clair began to creep forward, accompanied by a lengthy procession of camp followers.

Shortly after sunrise on 4 November 1791 St. Clair's camp on the banks of the Wabash River was attacked by 2,000 warriors led by Blue Jacket and Little Turtle, the Confederacy's war chiefs. St. Clair, old, sick and feeble, had neglected to post proper pickets around the badly-sited camp, but even so the initial attacks were twice repulsed. However, as one witness recorded, the Ohio warriors, "irritated beyond measure," simply retired:

> ... a little distance, where separating into their different tribes and each conducted by their own Leaders, they returned like Furies to the assault & almost instantly got possession of near half the Camp -- they found it in a row of Flour Bags, & bags of Stores, which serv'd them as a Breast work, from behind which kept up a constant & heavy fire, the Americans charg'd them several times with Fixed Bayonets, but were as often repuls'd – at length General Butler, second in Command, being kill'd, the Americans fell into confusion & were driven from their Cannon, round which a Hundred of their bravest Men fell, the Rout now became universal, & in the utmost disorder, the Indians follow'd for Six Miles & many fell Victims to their Fury.

When it was over, 647 American soldiers were dead, 229 wounded and all St. Clair's camp stores and 21 pieces of artillery lost. Aboriginal casualties were estimated to be 50 warriors killed and wounded. The 1791 battle of the Wabash was the greatest single victory against the United States gained by the Aboriginal peoples of North America.

Following that triumph, the Northwest Confederacy ravaged the white settlements on their side of the 1768 boundary for nearly two years but refrained from attacking American territory. Throughout its struggle, the Confederacy received advice from officers of the Indian Department at Detroit, but their requests for active military support went unheeded. Britain did offer to mediate in the contest and suggested the establishment of an independent and neutral Aboriginal state between the Mississippi, the Ohio and the Great Lakes but, not surprisingly, this proposal was firmly rejected by the American government which regarded it as unwanted meddling. For nearly three years, Britain, the United States, the Confederacy and the Six Nations of Canada under Joseph Brant tried to end the controversy over the boundary through a series of conferences, but the aboriginals of the Northwest would not give an inch on the key issue, remaining adamant that the Ohio River continue to be the dividing line.

Their dreams of independence were shattered in 1794 when a new and well-trained American army under Major-General Anthony Wayne advanced into their territory and beat off a series of attacks which culminated in American victory at the battle of Fallen Timbers in August 1794. When British leaders in Canada refused military aid, the Confederacy began to fall apart. Tensions between Britain and the United States, which had come close to the point of war over the troubles in the Northwest and maritime matters on the high seas, were ameliorated with the signing of Jay's Treaty in 1794, which saw the British turn over the posts they had retained on American territory in return for the stipulation that British subjects and aboriginal peoples could pass freely over the border.

For the Confederacy, the result was despair. Some Natives fled to Canada but most signed a general peace treaty with Wayne in 1795 that ceded the entire Ohio valley to the American government. Their stand against the United States, which had lasted twelve years, had failed, but it had an important effect on the history of Canada because it deflected American pressure to the west, allowing time for the infant province of Upper Canada to take root and prosper.

Tecumseh, His Confederacy and the Road to War

For nearly a decade after the battle of Fallen Timbers, there was relative peace in the Northwest. White settlers flooded into the area and the new American territories of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio were established. But the Northwest nations had not forgotten their humiliation and began to pay increasing attention to an impressive young Shawnee named Tecumseh who urged the creation of a single native confederacy stretching from the Canadian border to Spanish territory in Mexico that would be strong enough to resist the encroachment of the "Big Knives," as he termed the Americans. Tecumseh travelled ceaselessly, spreading this appealing message to the Aboriginal peoples from the Great Lakes to the mouth of the Mississippi river. But while Tecumseh gave his listeners hope for the future he also advised them not to engage in warfare with the Americans until the time was right.

Not surprisingly the popularity of the charismatic Tecumseh worried American frontier officials. Governor William Henry Harrison of the Indiana Territory met with Tecumseh twice in vain attempts to reduce the increasing tension between the Aboriginal peoples and white settlers, and he was both impressed and concerned:

> The implicit obedience and respect which the followers of Tecumseh pay to him, is really astonishing, and more than any other circumstance bespeaks him one of those uncommon geniuses which spring up occasionally to produce revolutions, and overturn the established order of things. If it were not for the vicinity of the United States, he would, perhaps, be the founder of an empire that would rival in glory Mexico or Peru. No difficulties deter him. For four years he has been in constant motion. You see him to-day on the Wabash, and in a short time hear of him on the shores of Lake Erie or Michigan, or on the banks of the Mississippi; and wherever he goes he makes an impression favorable to his purposes. He is now upon the last round to put a finishing stroke to his work.

In the autumn of 1811, Harrison decided to make a pre-emptive strike against this latest Confederacy. In early November, while Tecumseh was absent on a journey to the south, he moved a force of regulars and militia near to the village established by Tecumseh's brother, Tenskwatawa, or the Prophet, at Tippecanoe (near modern Lafayette, Indiana). The Prophet was unable to restrain his warriors and sniping between sentries escalated into a pitched battle that was won by the Americans. Many of the defeated fled to the safety of Canada.

When Tecumseh returned to the area early in 1812, he set out to rebuild his Confederacy and took steps to placate American authorities. At the same time, he sought the assistance of British officers of the Indian Department who listened to him because they were convinced that war with the United States was at hand. Although Tecumseh still counselled peace, he also believed war was imminent and promised his Confederacy would ally itself with Britain in the forthcoming contest. As he expressed it to the Indian Department officers, "if their father the King should be in earnest and appear in sufficient force, they would hold fast by him." Tecumseh also stated that his followers were determined to defend their land and, although they did not expect Britain to engage in military operations, they did expect logistical support – "you will push forward towards us what may be necessary to supply our wants." For their part, the Indian Department cautioned the confederacy not to attack until war was declared. As one officer put it, "Keep your eyes fixed on me; my tomahawk is now up; be you ready, but do not strike until I give the signal."

Tecumseh agreed with this advice but warned the British that:

> If we hear of the Big Knives coming towards our villages to speak peace, we will receive them, but if We hear of any of our people being hurt by them, or if they unprovokedly advance against us in a hostile manner, be assured we will defend ourselves like men. And if we hear of any of our people having been killed, We will immediately send to all the Nations on or towards the Mississippi, and all this Island will rise as one man.

Throughout this period, the Indian Department had continued to provide annual gifts to aboriginal peoples in the United States and shelter for refugees from the struggles below the border, functions that were regarded with great suspicion by Americans. Although some warriors from Aboriginal nations residing on Canadian territory had participated in the fighting in the Ohio valley, native leaders in Canada did their best to resolve the differences between the Northwest nations and the Americans by peaceful means. The Seven Nations of Canada and the Iroquoian peoples in Upper Canada had seen enough of conflict in the previous century and preferred to stay out of Anglo-American quarrels. This desire to remain neutral became difficult, however, as Britain and the United States drifted toward war in the first decade of the nineteenth century. The origins of the tensions between the two was, as usual, to be found in Europe.

In 1793, revolutionary France had declared war on Britain, initiating a struggle that would ensue, with a brief intermission, for 23 years. Both countries had adopted restrictive maritime policies, forbidding the ships of neutral nations that traded with one belligerent from trading with the other, and these measures severely curtailed the profits of American merchants. Since the British were supreme at sea, particularly after Nelson's great naval victory at Trafalgar in 1805, American resentment became exacerbated by the Royal Navy's penchant for stopping American vessels on the high seas and forcibly impressing their sailors into British service. Many also suspected that Britain was fomenting trouble in the Northwest by actively supporting the nations of Tecumseh's Confederacy.

Britain, pre-occupied with the war in Europe, seemed oblivious to American concerns and, a few weeks after the battle of Tippecanoe in 1811, President James Madison of the United States, convinced that war was the only way that his country could resolve its grievances, decided to put the republic "in armour" and prepare for hostilities against Britain. Given the overwhelming strength of the Royal Navy, the United States had only one practical military option – an attack on Canada.

CHAPTER 2

IN DEFENCE OF THEIR NATION

The Coming of War

Lieutenant-General Sir George Prevost, governor-general and commander-in-chief of the British colonies in North America, knew that because of British commitments in Europe he could not expect massive troop reinforcements. Prevost had about 5,600 regular soldiers in Upper and Lower Canada, backed up by some 60,000 militia in the lower province and 11,000 in the upper. Faced by an enemy population estimated to be more than seven million, his plan was to abandon Upper Canada, surrounded on three sides by American territory, and retire on Montreal, and, if necessary, Quebec, until he could be reinforced from Britain.

This cautious defensive strategy did not meet with the approval of Major-General Isaac Brock, his subordinate commander in Upper Canada. Brock argued that the upper province could be successfully defended if the Aboriginal nations in the Northwest were supplied by the Indian Department and encouraged to attack the frontier settlements in that area, disrupting possible American invasion plans. But, Brock added, "before we can expect an active cooperation on the part of the Indians, the reduction of Detroit and Michilimackinac must convince that people, who conceive themselves to have been sacrificed in 1794, to our policy, that we are earnestly engaged in war."

Throughout the six months preceding the American declaration of war in June 1812, Indian Department officers had secretly worked to organize Native peoples on both Canadian and American territory. The Department estimated that, in the event of hostilities, it could call on the services of 10,000 warriors from the Canadas and the Northwest. The greater number, 8,410 according to the Department, would come from the western nations resident "on the frontier of the United States extending from Sandusky on Lake Erie to the River Mississippi," who were all expected to take up arms for the British Crown or to be "amicable to the Cause." There were far fewer warriors available on Canadian territory. The Seven Nations of Canada were estimated to be only 1040 strong, while in Upper Canada the Iroquois people on the Grand River and at Tyendinaga, and the Mississagas and Ojibwa peoples together, could only contribute 550 men. In making their calculations, however, the departmental officers cautioned that the Aboriginal peoples in the Canadas "have greatly lost their ancient Character by their intermixture with the Whites."

This belief was accurate. In contrast to the western nations, many of which were prepared to fight on the British side, the response of the Native peoples in Canada disappointed British military leaders. This was particularly true of the Grand River nations, the strongest single Aboriginal force in Canada, who adopted a neutral stance toward the forthcoming conflict at the urging of their fellow Iroquois resident in American territory. The Grand River peoples had longstanding grievances against officials of the Indian Department, whom they suspected were profiting from the sale of their lands to the whites, and their stance did not change even when Brock promised to investigate these grievances and, if appropriate, adjust them in their favour. More persuasive was the argument made by a delegation of Cayuga and Onondaga chiefs from the United States who visited the Grand River in June 1812 to advise caution.

> We have come from our homes to warn you, that you may preserve yourselves and families from distress. We discover that the British and Americans are on the Eve of a War, – they are in dispute respecting some rights on the Sea, with which we are unacquainted; – should it end in a Contest, let us keep aloof: – Why should we again fight, and call upon ourselves the resentment of the Conquerors? We know that neither of these powers have any regard for us. In the former War, we espoused the cause of the King, We thought it the most honourable, – all our former Treaties having been made with his Representatives. After contending seven years without listening to the pacific overtures sent from the Enemy, -- we found, – that Peace was concluded across the Sea, and that our Enemy claimed our Territory in consequence of the Boundary Line then acceded to.

"Experience," the chiefs concluded, had convinced the Iroquois people of the white man's "neglect, except when they want us. Why then should we endanger the comfort, even the existence of our families, to enjoy their smiles only for the Day in which they need us?"

This was sound and very honest reasoning in favour of keeping out of the white man's quarrels, and a majority of the peoples living along the Grand were disposed to accept it despite the exhortations of a smaller pro-British faction led by John Norton, Teyoninhokarawen, or the Snipe. The son of a Cherokee father and a Scots mother, Norton had become a respected leader of that nation and by 1812 was a prominent war chief. As he recorded in the journal he left for posterity, (one of the best eyewitness accounts of the War of 1812 from either side), few among the Grand River peoples were disposed to listen to the words of an aged warrior who reminded his fellow Iroquois that:

> ... when our ancestors first saw the English, they took each other by the hand, and became friends; – since that time, they have risked in every War, and many have fallen. We are now much reduced in Number, but we are, notwithstanding, determined to conquer or fall in espousing the same cause for which our Ancestors have fought and bled.

The Grand River nations were going to remain neutral and Norton was forced to report to Brock that the community was divided but that, if threatened by American invasion, "I have no doubts they are not so depraved as to be faithless."

1812: A Year of Victories

On 18 June 1812 the United States declared war on Great Britain. American leaders were confident; "the acquisition of Canada this year will be a mere matter of marching" boasted former President Thomas Jefferson. Impelled by urgent requests from territorial governors in the Northwest concerned about preserving their frontier settlements against Tecumseh and his allies, the main American thrust was planned in the Detroit area. Thus, from the outset of the war, American strategic thinking was influenced by the need to reduce what was perceived as a dangerous aboriginal threat in the Northwest, and deflected from the proper objective – the vulnerable St. Lawrence waterway. This policy did not change throughout the war and was, more than military victories, the major contribution of the Aboriginal peoples to the successful defence of Canada.

In early July, American Brigadier-General William Hull crossed the Detroit and invaded Upper Canada with a large force of regulars and militia. Hull had convinced himself that the nations of the Detroit and Upper Great Lakes, bribed by presents and promises from American agents, would remain neutral but he was soon disabused of this notion. On 17 July, a small British force consisting of a few regulars, fur traders, and 130 Menominee, Winnebago and Sioux warriors surrounded the American fort on Mackinac Island which guarded the water passage to Lake Michigan and persuaded the American commander to surrender without a fight. This early victory convinced the peoples of the Northwest that the British were in earnest and they began to threaten Hull's supply lines, forcing him to withdraw from Canada and take up a defensive position at Detroit. By early August, contingents under the overall command of Tecumseh were actively prowling around the American position and attacking supply columns. Hull began to lose his nerve.

The victory at Mackinac had given Brock one of the two objectives he regarded as necessary to secure a firm alliance with the Northwest peoples. The other was Detroit and, in early August, Brock moved west from the provincial capital at York (modern Toronto) to Amherstburg with a force of regulars and militia. He reached that place on 13 August and there, for the first time, met Tecumseh who had gathered six hundred warriors to participate in the forthcoming operation. The two men liked and trusted each other from the outset, and Brock wrote to Prevost, "a more sagacious or a more gallant Warrior" than the Shawnee chief "does not I believe exist." On Tecumseh's side, he listened as the British general told his assembled warriors that he had "fought against the enemies of our great father, the king, beyond the great lake, and they have never seen my back." He had come to fight "his enemies on this side of the great salt lake, and now desire with my soldiers to take lessons from you and your warriors, that we may learn how to make war in these great forests." These words met with great applause and when Brock had finished Tecumseh is said to have pointed at the British general and exclaimed: "Ho-o-o-e: This is a man!"

The combined force then moved on Detroit where Hull, convinced he was surrounded by superior numbers of British regulars and warriors, was becoming increasingly distraught. He was even less happy when he received a letter from Brock containing the grim hint that, since "the numerous body of Indians who have attached themselves to my troops, will be beyond control the moment the contest commences," Hull should surrender in order "to prevent the unnecessary effusion of blood." The American commander, shaken and seeing bloodthirsty savages behind every bush, at first refused, but after Brock's artillery opened fire, agreed to surrender his entire force of about 2,000 well-entrenched men to Brock, who commanded about 1,300 white and Aboriginal soldiers. Brock's bluff had paid off and the only field force in the American army marched into captivity. The victory at Detroit, coming on the heels of the success at Mackinac electrified both the white and Aboriginal peoples of Upper Canada, many of whom had expected that the province would succumb to overwhelming enemy strength. But in late September and early October, American troops began massing on the Niagara frontier.

To meet this threat, Brock now moved the greater part of his forces to Fort George, near Newark (modern Niagara-on-the-Lake). He was joined there by Norton and a force of Grand River warriors who, buoyed by the victories in the west, had now decided to take an active role in the defence of Canada. By October, however, many had decided to go home for, as Norton recorded:

> ... the approach of Winter made them feel the Want of Warm Clothing, and in constant Marching they had worn out their Mocasins. The fall of the Leaf, the season for hunting the Buck, had arrived, & many had gone to the Woods, to supply their Wants by the Chase; -- few would have remained, had not the Love of Glory animated their hearts & inspired Patience to Support them in their Sufferings.

Norton was at Newark on the morning of 13 October when information came that the Americans had crossed the Niagara River and established themselves in the village of Queenston, seven miles south. He was ordered to assemble his warriors and move to the threatened spot but, on the way, learned that Brock had been killed leading a counterattack and that the invaders were in a strong position on the heights above Queenston. The British forces at Queenston were outnumbered by the Americans and it would be some time before reinforcements of regular troops would arrive. Norton's men hesitated but one of his warriors urged his "Comrades and Brothers" to:

> ... be Men; – remember the fame of ancient Warriors, whose Breasts were never daunted by odds of number; – We have found what we came for ...... there they are, – it only remains to fight. ...... Look up, it is He above who shall decide our fate. Our gallant friends the Red Coats, will soon support us.

The war party ascended the heights by a little known path and got into the rear of the American position, where they began to snipe at the invaders who replied with volleys of musketry. The warriors fired single, accurate shots with "coolness & Spirit" and, as Norton remarked, "altho' their [American] fire certainly made the greatest noise, from the Number of Musquets, yet I believe ours did the most Execution." For several hours Norton's warriors, vastly outnumbered, harassed the Americans, until British reinforcements arrived and a general attack commenced against the invaders which pushed them back to the edge of the cliffs overlooking the Niagara gorge. John Norton recorded the final moments of the battle.

> We rushed forward, & saw the Grenadiers led by Lt. Bullock coming from the right along the Bank of the River; – the Enemy disappeared under the Bank; many plunging into the River. The inconsiderate still continued to fire at them [in the water], until checked by repeated commands of "Stop Fire." The White Flag from the American General then met General Sheaffe [the British successor to Brock], proposing to Surrender at Discretion the remainder of those who had invaded us. The Prisoners amounted to about Nine Hundred.

The battle of Queenston Heights was a signal victory, but the death of Brock, as Norton remembered, "threw a gloom over the sensations which this brilliant Success might have raised."

1813: Triumphs and Disasters

The loss of Detroit was a major setback for the United States and Madison's government immediately commenced planning a counter-attack. William Henry Harrison, the popular and effective governor of the Indiana Territory, was given the regular army rank of major-general and command of a force of 6,000 regulars and militia with orders to break the power of the Northwest nations and retake Detroit. Throughout the last months of 1812, Harrison, an experienced frontier campaigner, took time to prepare for his offensive, first establishing supply depots so that his large army would not have to guard extensive supply lines. One of his subordinates, Brigadier-General James Winchester, however, became impatient and decided to move forward to the British outpost of Frenchtown on the River Raisin, about forty kilometres southwest of Detroit. The British commander on the western frontier, Brigadier-General Henry Procter, assembled a force of 550 regulars and militia and about 600 warriors from the Northwest nations and attacked him on 22 January. British casualties were heavy – nearly a third of the regulars involved – but the fury of the warriors who harried the enemy flanks, terrified the Americans and the British general convinced Winchester to surrender. The victory, however, was tarnished when Procter neglected to take proper precautions to guard his prisoners and a party of Pottawatomi and Wyandot warriors murdered about thirty wounded Americans.

Throughout the course of the war, there was an element of savagery to the fighting in the Northwest. Atrocities were committed by both sides. The Americans, particularly the frontier militia, who were as barbarous in their conduct as their supposedly uncivilized opponents, were determined to end, once and for all, the Aboriginal threat in the area, and little quarter was asked or given between them and the Northwest peoples, who rightly regarded the war as a struggle for survival. The cruel nature of the conflict was aptly summed up by Assiginack, or Black Bird, an Ottawa chief, in a speech addressed to the officers of the Indian Department who had admonished him for not restraining his warriors' excesses in battle.

> We have listened to your words, which words come from our father. We will now say a few words to you. At the foot of the Rapids last spring we fought the Big Knives, and we lost some of our people there. When we retired the Big Knives got some of our dead. They were not satisfied with having killed them, but cut them into small pieces. This made us very angry. My words to my people were: "As long as the powder burnt, to kill and scalp," but those behind us came up and did mischief. ...... Last year at Chicago and St. Joseph's the Big Knives destroyed all our corn. This was fair, but, brother, they did not allow the dead to rest. They dug up their graves, and the bones of our ancestors were thrown away and we never could find them to return them to the ground. ...
>
> I have listened with a good deal of attention to the wish of our father. If the Big Knives, after they kill people of our colour, leave them without hacking them to pieces, we will follow their example. They have themselves to blame. The way they treat our killed, and the remains of those that are in their graves in the west, makes our people mad when they meet the Big Knives. Whenever they get any of our people into their hands they cut them like meat into small pieces.
>
> We thought white people were Christians. They ought to show us a better example. We do not disturb their dead. What I say is known to all the people present. I do not tell a lie.

Although, as John Norton put it, there may have been isolated incidents of this type, it "would be useless as well as endless to repeat the number of cruelties that had been asserted, & as bluntly contradicted, – without proofs to substantiate either on one Side or the other. Meanwhile, greatly exaggerated accounts of the Frenchtown massacre circulated in the United States, instilling a desire for vengeance.

Frenchtown was not the only victory the defenders of Upper Canada gained that winter. On the morning of 22 February, a combined British/Canadian force that included thirty Tyendinaga Mohawk warriors crossed the ice of the frozen St. Lawrence and took the American village of Ogdensburg after a short but vicious battle. Thereafter, the tide began to turn as the United States mobilized its superior manpower to launch major offensives. At the end of April 1813, an American amphibious expedition attacked York, overwhelming the defenders who included forty Ojibway and Mississauga warriors, and captured the capital of Upper Canada.

A month later, another successful landing was made at Fort George, at the mouth of the Niagara river, and the British forces in the Niagara peninsula and their Aboriginal allies retreated to the area of what is now the modern city of Hamilton. For the first time in the war, the homes of the Grand River peoples were directly threatened and their support for the Crown began to waver. A British victory during the night action fought at Stoney Creek on 6 June, however, caused the invaders to withdraw to the fortified camp they had constructed near Fort George and it was not long before British regulars and Canadian militia, together with their Native allies, closed in around the American position.

The American commander, Major-General Henry Dearborn, decided to respond by mounting an expedition against De Cew's House, known to be the forward supply depot for the aboriginal warriors harassing his positions and garrisoned by about fifty white soldiers under the command of Lieutenant James FitzGibbon. About two kilometres east of FitzGibbon's post, nearer Fort George, some 200 warriors from the Grand River peoples, 180 from the Seven Nations of Canada, and 70 Ojibway and Mississaugas from Upper Canada, under the command of Dominique Ducharme and John Brant, were encamped near a locality known as the Beaver Dams, an area of ponds and streams close to what is now the modern city of St. Catharines.

On 23 June, a force of 600 American regular infantry and cavalry with three pieces of artillery, marched out of Fort George for De Cew's House under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Boerstler. Contact was made just after dawn on 24 June, when "an Indian scout was killed by a flanker but his companion made his escape." Ducharme and Brant laid an ambush on both sides of the road through the Beaver Dams.

The American advance guard consisted of a small troop of regular cavalry. As this force entered the woods the Seven Nations warriors fired on them, inflicting heavy casualties and causing the survivors to flee back down the road in order to warn Boerstler, coming up with the main body. He deployed his infantry into line and opened fire with musketry and artillery which inflicted some casualties on his attackers. Using the trees as cover, however, the warriors moved in close to the American position and sniped at the enemy until, as one of the Indian Department officers remembered, "their horrible yells terrified the enemy so much that they retired precipately" into a hollow where they were surrounded. The fighting continued for another two hours and the Americans were running short of ammunition when a flag of truce appeared carried by Lieutenant FitzGibbon.

FitzGibbon was taken to Boerstler and informed the American commander that he was surrounded, not only by warriors from the Canadas but also those from the Northwest who were "by no means as easily controlled," and, as they "had suffered very severely they were outrageous and would commence a general massacre," if Boerstler did not immediately yield. There was some brief discussion, but Boerstler knew his position could only grow worse as additional British and Aboriginal forces came up and he therefore surrendered. This battle of the Beaver Dams was one of the most notable aboriginal victories of the War of 1812 – for a cost of not more than twenty killed and wounded, the warriors had killed, wounded or captured six hundred Americans. FitzGibbon later wrote:

> With respect to the affair with Captain [sic] Boerstler, not a shot was fired on our side by any but the Indians. They beat the American detachment into a state of terror, and the only share I claim is taking advantage of a favourable moment to offer them protection from the tomahawk and scalping knife.

The twin victories at Stoney Creek and Beaver Dams blunted the American campaign in the Niagara peninsula, and the war in that quarter degenerated into a stalemate. To the west, Procter and Tecumseh had taken the offensive during the spring and summer of 1813 and driven deep into the Ohio Territory, but without heavy artillery were unable to overcome the American fortified posts at Forts Meigs and Stephenson. In the type of siege warfare required to reduce these positions, Tecumseh's large force of warriors, which at one point numbered more than a thousand, were of limited use, for, as he said, it was hard "to fight people who live like ground hogs." Procter called off the offensive and retreated to Amherstburg, accompanied by Tecumseh's warriors and many of their families.

The British general's supply lines depended on his controlling Lake Erie and throughout the summer the Americans had been feverishly constructing a squadron of warships at Presque'Isle, on the southern shore of that lake. Although the British naval commander, Commander Robert H. Barclay, had been keeping a watchful blockade of the American base, a moment of inattention allowed the American ships under Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, USN, to emerge and challenge Barclay for control of Lake Erie. On 8 September Barclay sailed from Amherstburg to give battle and two days later gunfire was heard in the village as the rival squadrons engaged. The entire British squadron was captured and when news of this disaster reached Procter, he decided to retreat toward Burlington Bay (now Hamilton Harbour). He neglected, however, to inform Tecumseh or the thousands of warriors and their families camped in and around Amherstburg. Their suspicions became aroused when they saw the British dismantling the fortifications of the post and loading supplies and ammunition into wagons for a retreat.

At a council between Procter and his officers and the native leaders, held on 18 September 1813, Tecumseh delivered a stinging rebuke to his British ally that summarized the disappointments and disasters that regularly occurred when Aboriginal peoples became involved in white conflicts. In what later became known as the "yellow dog" speech, Tecumseh castigated Proctor by likening him to "a fat animal that carries its tail upon its back; but when affrighted, it drops it between its legs and runs off."

Procter's mind was made up, however, and in late September his small army commenced a retreat towards Lake Ontario, accompanied by the reluctant Tecumseh and his followers, convinced with some reason that they had been betrayed. On 5 October, Tecumseh's old opponent, Major-General William Henry Harrison, caught up with the them near the Moraviantown mission on the Thames river. Procter deployed his regular infantry badly and they were simply run down by Harrison's mounted troops, at which point the British general fled the battle. Tecumseh and his warriors fought well enough to let many of their white allies escape and finally stubbornly retired through the woods. But Tecumseh was not with them – killed during the battle, his body was spirited away by his warriors to be placed in an unknown grave. Harrison's victorious troops, included many Kentucky frontiersmen who displayed "peculiar Cruelty to the Families of the Indians who had not Time to escape, or conceal Themselves."

The last months of the year brought renewed success to British arms. In October and November, two American armies moving on Montreal were stopped by the twin victories at Chateauguay and Crysler's Farm and aboriginal warriors participated in both actions.

The End of the War and the Treaty of Ghent

The disastrous defeat at the Thames marked the end of the military power of the Northwest peoples. Although some of the nations continued to fight on, and achieved some success at Prairie du Chien, on the upper Mississippi, in 1814, most of the nations either made a separate peace with the United States or fled to British territory where they were reduced to the status of supplicants for the Crown's not very generous welfare. By 1814, the third year of the war, military campaigns were being waged largely by increasing numbers of British and American regular troops who engaged in a number of pitched battles in the Niagara peninsula and Lake Champlain valley. Although the Aboriginal nations from the Northwest and their allies from the Canadas participated in some of these engagements, their function was less crucial as they served in a purely auxiliary role.

For many, the war had interrupted their traditional way of life and unable to procure food for their families, either by agriculture or hunting, they were dependent on rations provided by the British authorities. As there was a considerable shortage of foodstuffs in Upper Canada in the latter part of the war, this meant that many of them were starving. As Little Crow, a chief of the Sioux, informed Indian Department officers:

> Although you give Assistance to all Your Children, Yet you have too many to care of, before it can reach us. We have of late not had much assistance through you, My Father, for one half of our Nation have died of hunger with shreds of skin in their mouths for want of other Nourishment. I have always thought and do so still, that it arises from no other cause but the troubles you have with the Americans.

In August 1814, negotiations to end the war began on neutral ground in the then Dutch city of Ghent. Mindful of the disastrous omission of the Aboriginal peoples from the Treaty of Paris which had ended the Revolutionary War, the British negotiators came to the table with a demand that the Native allies of Great Britain were to be included in the treaty and "a definite boundary to be settled for their territory." So important did the British government regard this matter, that its negotiators informed their American counterparts, that "they were not authorized to conclude a

Treaty of peace which did not embrace the Indians, as Allies of His Britannic Majesty; and that the [establishment of an] Indian Territory was necessary, to secure a permanent peace."

The American were even more shocked when they learned that "the object of the British government was, that the Indians should remain as a permanent barrier between our western settlements, and the adjacent British province," and neither nation "should ever hereafter have the right to purchase, or acquire any part of the territory thus recognized, as belonging to the Indians." When they pointed out that perhaps a hundred thousand of their citizens presently lived in the area that the British proposed to form into an aboriginal nation, and reasonably asked "the intention of the British government respecting them," they got the rather unhelpful reply that "such of the Inhabitants, as would ultimately be included with the Indian Territory, must make their own arrangements and provide for themselves."

The British position was totally unacceptable to the United States and negotiations stalled. After much discussion on the subject, the American delegates suggested that, instead of the creation of an Indian boundary state in the northwest portion of the Republic, the final treaty include "a reciprocal and general stipulation of amnesty covering all persons, red as well as white, in the enjoyment of rights possessed at the commencement of the war." This was rejected by the British negotiators but, after consultation with London, they were instructed to drop the demand for the creation of a barrier state and, instead, to propose the following article for inclusion in the treaty.

> The United States of America engage to put an end immediately after the ratification of the present Treaty, to hostilities with all the Tribes or Nations of Indians, with whom they may be at war at the time of such ratification, and forthwith to restore to such Tribes or Nations respectively all the possessions, rights and privileges, which they may have enjoyed or been entitled to in 1811, previous to the hostilities.
>
> Provided always, that such Tribes or Nations shall agree to desist from all hostilities against the United States of America, their Citizens, and subjects, upon the ratification of the present Treaty being notified to such Tribes or Nations, and shall so desist accordingly.

This proposed article concluded with a parallel engagement on the part of Great Britain, and the diplomatic note in which it appeared stated that it was an ultimatum upon which the continuance of negotiations would depend.

There is little doubt that the Aboriginal peoples contemplated by the authors of this draft article were those residing on American territory who had fought for Britain in the war, particularly those Northwest nations who had been members of Tecumseh's Confederacy. This is evidenced by the specific reference to the year 1811, when fighting that led to the battle of Tippecanoe in November of that year broke out in the northwest, and not 1812 when the United States had declared war on Britain. After much discussion the American delegates accepted this proposal and it appeared as Article IX of the Treaty of Ghent which was signed on Christmas Eve, 1814.

Three days later, the British government sent a copy of the treaty to Sir George Prevost and drew his attention to those articles relating to the Aboriginal peoples "that may be at war with either of the two contracting parties." Prevost was directed to assure them that the Crown "would not have consented to make peace with the United States of America unless those Nations or tribes which had taken part with us, had been included in the Pacification." He was to use his "utmost endeavours" to induce the Aboriginal peoples resident in the United States to conclude separate peace treaties with the American government "as we could not be justified in offering them further assistance if they should persist in Hostilities."

Prevost did not receive this dispatch until March 1815 but he had already been apprized of some of the contents of the treaty in October 1814, when official letters from the American delegation at Ghent had appeared in American newspapers, including a draft of Article IX. He had immediately directed that the Indian Department convene meetings with the Aboriginal peoples at Burlington Heights, Saginaw Bay, Michilimackinac, Green Bay and Prairie du Chien. Ironically, with the exception of Burlington Heights, all these meetings took place on American territory in present-day Michigan or Wisconsin.

On 24 April 1815, a council was held at Burlington Heights to provide information about the treaty of Ghent to the large contingent of warriors from the Northwest nations who had fled to that place with their families in 1813 and also to representatives from the Grand River settlement and other nations resident in Canada. At this meeting, a senior officer of the Indian Department thanked those present for their efforts in warding off American aggression and informed them that, in making peace with the United States, their interests "were not neglected."

As events would show, the War of 1812 would not be the last time that Aboriginal peoples would be called upon to defend Canada.

On 18 September 1813 the aboriginal leader Tecumseh, angered by the decision of the local British commander to retreat from the Detroit frontier, addressed the following speech to him. It is perhaps the best and most powerful summation of the troubles suffered by the Aboriginal peoples when they became involved in white conflicts.

> Father!
> Listen to your children; you see them now all before you. The war before this [the American Revolution] our British Father gave the hatchet to his red children, when our old chiefs were alive. They are now all dead. In that war our Father was thrown on his back by the Americans, and our Father took them by the hand without our knowledge, and we are afraid our Father will do so again at this time. Summer before last, when I came forward with my red children, and was ready to take up the hatchet in favour of our British Father, we were told not to be in a hurry -- that he had not yet determined to fight the Americans.
>
> Listen!
> When war was declared, our Father stood up and gave us the tomahawk, and told us he was now ready to strike the Americans, that he wanted our assistance; and that he certainly would get us our lands back which the Americans had taken from us.
>
> Listen!
> You told us at that time to bring forward our families to this place. We did so, and you promised to take care of them, and that they should want for nothing, while the men would go to fight the enemy -- that we were not to trouble ourselves with the enemy's garrisons -- that we knew nothing about them, and that our Father would attend to that part of the business. You also told your red children that you would take care of your garrison here which made our hearts glad.
>
> Listen! Father listen!
> Our fleet has gone out, we know they have fought; we have heard the great guns; but know nothing of what has happened to our Father with one Arm [Commander R.H. Barclay]. Our ships have gone one way, and we are much astonished to see our Father tying up every thing and preparing to run the other, without letting his red children know what his intentions are. You always told us to remain here and take care of our lands; it made our hearts glad to hear that was your wish.
>
> ...... You always told us that you would never draw your foot off British ground; but now, Father, we see you are drawing back, and we are sorry to see our Father doing so, without seeing the enemy. We must compare our Father's conduct to a fat animal that carries its tail upon its back; but when affrighted, it drops it between its legs and runs off.
>
> Listen Father!
> The Americans have not yet defeated us by land; neither are we sure that they have done so by water; we therefore wish to remain here, and fight our enemy should they make their appearance. If they defeat us, we will then retreat with our Father. ......
>
> Father!
> You have got the arms and ammunition which our Great Father sent for his red children. If you have an idea of going away, give them to us, and you may go and welcome for us. Our lives are in the hands of the Great Spirit. We are determined to defend our lands, and if it is his will, we wish to leave our bones upon them.

CHAPTER 3

THE PATH TO ACCEPTANCE

Post-1815: Background

Prior to the conclusion of the War of 1812, Aboriginals were able to take to the field as organized groups under their own indigenous leadership, as full and equal allies of the Crown, whenever they chose to fight. By the middle of the nineteenth century their circumstances and fortunes had changed dramatically for the worse, and they had become enclaved within the developing and ever-expanding colonies of British North America. they were, for a period of time, largely excluded from various national projects, including military service. Beginning in the decades following the War of 1812, official policy was that Aboriginal peoples were to be either dispersed or isolated, with any remnant populations being assimilated directly into colonial society.

When Aboriginal communities in Upper Canada offered to form all-Native volunteer militia companies at the time of the Rebellions of 1837-38, and again during the Fenian raids, colonial authorities were hesitant. While it was recognized that groups of organized indigenous militia would be of tremendous value, some government authorities questioned the role to which they would revert come peacetime as the government attempted to resume its long-term project of Aboriginal assimilation. With a lessening (but not disappearance) of border tensions between the British colonies and the United States through the Rush-Bagot Convention of 1817; the diminishment of the fur trade as a foundation of the North American economy; and with enormous Aboriginal population declines occurring simultaneously with exponential increases in the rate of European immigration, the support of Native peoples was no longer seen as essential, whether in military or economic terms. In effect, Indians ceased being regarded as potential military allies during war or as trade partners in peace, and increasingly were seen as economic liabilities and as impediments to colonial growth and expansion. In the space of two decades colonial officials had become suspicious of Aboriginals who tried to organize themselves militarily.

Significantly, by 1830 the administration of Indian affairs in the Canadas had passed from military to civilian jurisdiction. Formerly, the Indian Department - a uniformed branch of the British Army serving in North America, typically attached to its commissary staff or quartermaster's corps - had been responsible for cultivating Aboriginal goodwill and co-operation during both war and peace. One of its principal duties had been to oversee the distribution of annual presents and other considerations in recognition of their former service as the Crown's military allies. In 1830, however, the administration of Indian affairs devolved to civil authority, to be divided in the Canadas between the lieutenant-governor and a superintendent in Upper Canada, and a civilian military secretary in Lower Canada. No more regular gifts for the traditional reasons.

Meanwhile, the military establishment (excluding British Army garrisons and Royal Navy squadrons stationed on either coast) in what is now Canada consisted of white militia units of very doubtful value, most restricting themselves to poorly-attended annual musters that bore more resemblance to social encounter groups than military parades. The year 1846 saw, in the newly-united Canadas, the passage of a provincial Militia Act providing for an unpaid Active Militia of up to 30,000 all ranks for those who were keen, and divided the Sedentary Militia into a first-class and a second-class, for those males between the ages of 18 and 39 years, and 40 to 60 years old, respectively. In the Maritime provinces similar arrangements were introduced over the next few years. There was still very little that was military about them, however. The defence of British North America lay largely in the hands of the Royal Navy and the British Army.

The Road to Rebellion

In 1855, following the withdrawal from North America of a large proportion of British regulars for service in the Crimea, a revised Province of Canada Militia Act sought to rejuvenate and bolster the existing system and organization of Active Militia units. The principle of compulsory enrolment in a Sedentary or Reserve Militia was retained, while an expansion of paid volunteer units, i.e., the Active Militia, was more widely promoted. This is today acknowledged as the foundation of Canada's modern military establishment and organization.

The gradual movement toward self-government for the respective British North American provinces was viewed with caution by Native peoples, who believed that any recognition they might receive from government continued to flow from their historic peace and friendship treaty relationships with the Crown in England, and not from any agreements undertaken with increasingly independent colonial governments. They were endeavouring (often vainly) to protect their own interests, but their motivations were complex and multifaceted, and poor translations into English or French did not do justice to the rich symbolic and rhetorical language of aboriginal culture wherein complex political and economic interrelationships with Europeans, and with each other, were frequently expressed in metaphors of kinship and familial responsibility.

Within aboriginal political culture, alliances and treaties were envisaged as means of securing ongoing reciprocal relationships. Aboriginal peoples envisaged the treaties as living contracts or agreements, and not as individual once-and-for-all undertakings to give up their lands and sign away their rights forever. It was in this sense that Queen Victoria was conceived of as the 'Great Mother' or 'Our Mother' by prairie Indians and others, leading many contemporary observers to conclude that, from a certain stage in their relationships, they had suddenly adopted a stance of quaint or naive subservience to the person of the Monarch and her representatives on Canadian soil.

Not so. Native people well realized that in signing treaty documents they were undertaking certain responsibilities and obligations which for generations to come would have the most profound implications for their heirs and descendants. By situating themselves as children in relation to Queen Victoria as the 'Great Mother,' however, it was also their understanding that the Crown was agreeing to assume massive and permanent responsibilities for their future well-being and prosperity. Eventually Imperial, and then Dominion, officials began injecting the particular adjective 'White' into the honorific title of 'Great Mother,' reflecting their growing concern that notions of racial difference and superiority be somehow embedded within the relationship between the monarchy and its indigenous allies.

The outbreak of those violent political protests to be known as the Rebellions of 1837-38 in Upper and Lower Canada followed years of increasingly inflammatory rhetoric from a vocal minority of white radicals, or Reformers. In each instance there were calls for the elimination of corrupt patronage-riddled non-democratic administrative systems (the 'Family Compact' in Upper

Canada; the 'Chateau Clique' in Lower Canada), and their replacement with the institution of American-style republican reforms.

As events unfolded, and foreseeing the likely outcomes for themselves in the event of a Reform government (including the very real possibility of annexation by the United States), Aboriginals in both Upper and Lower Canada supported the continuity of Crown primacy. Their motivations encompassed a range of aims and, as noted above, were driven at least in part by fears of eventual annexation by the United States. They were well aware of the Americans' new approach to Indian policy, the principal instrument of which was Andrew Jackson's 'Indian Removal Act' of 1830 under which all Natives east of the Mississippi were to be forced west of that river. In fact the Indians of Upper Canada had already had a brief foretaste of such a policy when, in 1836, Francis Bond Head as lieutenant-governor, inspired by the perceived success of the Jacksonian model, had advocated their removal to Manitoulin Island. That idea, however, was never fully implemented, being withdrawn following protests by various missionary interests and the newly created London-based Aborigines Protection Society.

In the event, Native participation in the Rebellions, in common cause with other loyalists, allowed them to advance and promote their own interests in several ways. For one, it enabled them to reassert their direct link to the Crown in the face of the growing trend toward colonial home rule across British North America, emphasizing that their historic peace and friendship treaty relationships had been enacted directly with the Crown rather than with the appointed or elected representatives of the respective colonies or provinces constituting British North America. It also enabled individual fighters to achieve coveted warrior status within their respective communities during an era in which few occasions arose in which to do so. Furthermore, it provided those communities wishing to continue their hunting pursuits with an opportunity to replenish their stock of firearms and ammunition. This was especially true in those areas where, for various reasons, Aboriginals were less inclined to adopt agricultural pursuits, as had by this point become one of the principal aims of colonial Indian policy.

Métis Involvement

By the mid-1840s the British were again embroiled in boundary disputes with the United States, from the Prairies to the Pacific shore. Sir George Simpson, Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) governor for Rupert's Land, advocated that along the West Coast units of local Métis be organized for regional defence in conjunction with the units of Royal Marines and Royal Navy warships to be sent there. Units of mounted Métis and Indian riflemen should likewise be organized to serve alongside the regular forces which were to be dispatched to the Red River district.

This renewed Native military support interest raised new concerns in certain other quarters, however. The British were well aware of recent American experience in fighting the Black Hawk War of 1832, wherein historically pro-British factions of Sauk and Fox under the leadership of Chief Black Hawk had resisted American expansion into that region south and west of the Great Lakes formerly known as the Old Northwest. How would the Crown rationalize to the United States government its motives in training and equipping bands of Indians as part of their own armed forces? That is, how could the Americans be convinced that such units of Indian fighters were not to be used one day against them? Thus the Crown approach to the potential use of Aboriginal warriors was often ambivalent and contradictory, depending upon time, place and circumstance.

By the 1860s there were additional suspicions that some Métis were in fact Fenian sympathizers, advocating nothing less than the annexation of the Red River district by the United States. In order to dispel these fears, a formal offer of Métis assistance in countering the Fenian threat in Manitoba in 1871 was tendered under the political leadership of Louis Riel. Irregular units of armed Métis horsemen acting as mounted infantry were mobilized for homeland defence in small units based on methods adapted from the buffalo hunt, with elected 'captains' leading their mounted squads or platoons of ten 'soldiers' each. Had circumstances so necessitated, irregular units of mounted Métis infantry would have thus formed the core of homeland defence in this region of the Canadian West.

Their tactics had previously been successful in defeating Aboriginal opponents in competition over access to the declining buffalo herds. The Métis battle at the Grand Coteau in 1851 with bands of Dakota Sioux is the best documented example. Briefly, this battle was fought over two days on July 13 and 15 that year on the banks of a tributary of the Missouri River in the present-day state of North Dakota. It marks the single most significant feat of arms recorded in the annals of the Métis nation of the West. The opposing forces, a cart brigade of Métis buffalo hunters from the Red River parish of Saint Francois-Xavier at White Horse Plain on the Assiniboine River, and a much larger band of Dakota Sioux, clashed after encountering one another on the prairie southeast of the present location of Minot, North Dakota. The Métis were victorious through their unique fighting technique, which incorporated elements drawn both from plains Indian mounted warfare, and aspects of European cavalry and mounted infantry tactics.

The whole conduct of the Métis buffalo hunt, from scouting for buffalo to guarding against Indian attack, was carried through as a military drill. In circumstances of imminent attack, these drills prescribed the encircling of their Red River carts, wheel-to-wheel, with the poles from meat-drying racks run through the spokes to secure them together and render them immobile. Horses were kept inside the circle, while the women and children occupied trenches dug beneath the encircled carts, which were piled high with blankets, buffalo robes and other furs, and crates of supplies as shields against arrows and small-arms fire. An outer ring of rifle pits and slit trenches was dug beyond the circle of carts, while within the circle a selected number of the better Métis shots on their fastest mounts was held back in readiness, prepared to charge out in pursuit of retreating attackers. These were the main features of Métis battle tactics, and from the time of their decisive victory over the Dakota Sioux until their own rifle pits were overrun by Canadian militia armed with Gatling guns at Batoche in 1885, the Métis retained mastery over the plains in any future encounters with neighbouring First Nations groups.

Indian Status

The notion of a legal 'Indian status' was first introduced in Lower Canada (Canada East) in 1850, with the passage that year of 'An Act for the better protection of the Lands and Property of the Indians in Lower Canada.' This Act provided the first legal definition of who was to be considered an Indian for the purposes of the administration of Indian affairs. The definition contained in the 1850 legislation was relatively liberal, in the sense that it recognized as Indians not only such persons who were obviously racially Aboriginals, but also non-Indians who had intermarried into Indian communities or who were otherwise accepted by Aboriginals themselves as community members on the criteria of their own customary traditions. This included non-Aboriginals who had been adopted as infants, youths or adults into Indian communities. Definitions appearing in subsequent legislation were more exclusive and restrictive, as later governments became increasingly concerned with paring down rather than increasing the number of persons who might be eligible to receive treaty payments, rations, and other considerations or compensations.

Confederation (1867)

The federal union of the three British North American provinces of Canada (comprising Canada West, now Ontario; and Canada East, now Quebec), New Brunswick and Nova Scotia into the Dominion of Canada occurred in 1867. Subsequent provision was made for the later entry of other British holdings in North America: Rupert's Land and the North-West Territories were added in 1870, when Manitoba became a province, British Columbia (including the mainland and the former Crown colony of Vancouver Island) entered in 1871, Prince Edward Island in 1873, the Yukon Territory was established in 1898, Alberta and Saskatchewan joined in 1905, and Newfoundland in 1949. Sovereignty over the Arctic Islands was transferred from Britain to the Dominion of Canada in 1880.

When Manitoba entered Confederation, Métis, unlike status Indians, were legally recognized as ordinary British subjects, with the full range of political, legal and civil rights due all British subjects resident in the Dominion at that time. Nevertheless, their generally impoverished economic circumstances, combined with racism and resentment from surrounding white communities, more often than not had the net effect of consigning them to a marginal existence not dissimilar to that experienced by Indians. However, whereas status Indian bands had reserves of Crown lands assigned to them, held in trust for their exclusive use and occupancy, the Métis benefited from no such provisions. Like Métis, Inuit were excluded from the Indian Act, although a 1939 decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council found that for the purposes of the British North America Act, section 91(24), the administration of Inuit affairs was to be a federal responsibility.

The separate colonies had all developed somewhat different approaches to the development and administration of Indian policy within their respective jurisdictions. However, in the aftermath of Confederation, that model which had been developed in the Canadas became the template upon which all subsequent Dominion Indian policy was based. In the post-Confederation era, as the Dominion continued its expansion westward and northward, when and where efforts were made to bring Native peoples into the fold of the Canadian polity the mechanisms resorted to, including the pomp and ceremony associated with the treaty making process, had a strong military flavour to them and were largely martial in their origins. Crown and Dominion authorities typically wore uniform as they sat opposite Native leaders at the treaty table. The flags, medals and uniforms presented to Indian chiefs and councillors formed the unique material culture of the treaty-making process. An order-in-council and attached memorandum of the Privy Council, dated January 23 and 25, 1872, describes the suits of clothing and other articles to be presented to the leaders of those bands signatory to Treaty 1 in 1871, stipulating that the quality of the cloth provided be equal to that furnished in the uniforms of sergeants and volunteers of the Canadian militia, with suitable piping, and buttons bearing the inscription, 'Dominion of Canada Indians'. Thus was created the paramilitary aspect of the government-to-government relationship between the Aboriginal peoples and federal and provincial governments to which First Nations' leaders often refer today.

Wherever possible, Native leaders sought to avoid having their dealings with Crown authority delegated to Dominion representatives, much preferring direct links to the Sovereign via the office of the governor-general. That was an objective they found increasingly difficult to achieve, but at least initially they were adamant that they continue to be treated as allies of the British Crown, not as mere subjects, and even less so as citizens, of the new Dominion.

The first federal Militia Act of 1868 established a Department of Militia and Defence, divided the country into nine Military Districts, and legislated universal compulsory military service for all male inhabitants of Canada between the ages of eighteen and sixty capable of bearing arms. Within this structure - on paper at least - the Volunteer Militia, the Regular Militia and the Marine Militia constituted the Active Militia proper, while the Reserve Militia, analogous to the former colonial Sedentary Militias, existed as the military organization to which all males not otherwise engaged in the Active Militia were automatically considered to belong. Insofar as they were deemed British subjects, and to the extent that they had not yet negotiated any specific treaty exemptions from such duty, Aboriginals resident in the new Dominion were, by definition, automatically deemed part of this structure. Given their complexity, the nature of these treaty relationships warrants further explanation.

Treaties signed between Native bands and the Crown were formal agreements intended to create reciprocal obligations and impart benefits on both sides. They described specific duties and undertakings to which the respective parties would adhere in return for specified compensations and considerations. The Crown would receive access to ceded territories for future settlement and development, in exchange for which specified lands would be held in trust for the use and occupancy of the bands concerned. However, by the mid-nineteenth century, the assimilation of Aboriginal populations, entailing their conversion to Christianity, the elimination of distinctive indigenous cultural practices, and the occupation of Native lands, had become the objective of colonial, and subsequently Dominion, Indian policy.

This new approach had been formalized as early as 1850 in present-day Ontario with the negotiation that year of the Robinson-Huron and Robinson-Superior treaties. The process was resumed west of the Great Lakes in 1871, and from then through 1921, numbered treaties 1 to 11 were concluded across the present-day prairie provinces and much of the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories. These treaties typically provided for the cession and surrender of traditional territories and hunting grounds to the Crown in exchange for promises of reserved lands and the payment of certain compensations including cash, either in lump sums or as annuities. Wherever possible, agriculture was to be promoted as the new means of livelihood, in replacement of previous modes based upon the hunt, fishing, trapping and some horticulture. Accordingly, provisions were also made in many instances for the granting of annual supplies of seed, livestock, feed and a limited range of farming implements and other equipment. The furnishing of firearms and ammunition was reduced correspondingly.

With the coming of Confederation, just as section 91(7) of the British North America Act (today, the Constitution Act, 1867) imparted to the federal level of government exclusive jurisdiction over all matters pertaining to 'Militia, Military and Naval Service, and Defence,' so too did section 91(24) impart exclusive jurisdiction over all matters pertaining to 'Indians and Lands Reserved for Indians.' And just as defence critics have consistently argued that the federal government has typically attempted to meet its defence obligations at the minimum possible expense, so too have similar criticisms been levied by Aboriginal critics against the federal government relative to its administration of Indian affairs.

Federal responsibility for the administration of Indian affairs was codified in 1876 with the passage that year of the first consolidated Indian Act which brought the entire spectrum of a national Indian policy under one cover. Through the Act, an entire category of the Canadian population had its dealings with governmental authority unilaterally and arbitrarily delegated to a single level of government - the federal - and within that, to a single departmental interest - that responsible for Indian Affairs. Provisions within the Act codified federal authority over virtually every aspect of Indian life at both the individual and collective level, from the legal recognition of Indian status and band membership at the time of birth, to the selection of political leadership on reserve lands, to the execution of wills at death.

Soldiering On

Overseas commitments began with the Nile Expedition of 1884, followed by the South African War, two World Wars, the Korean Conflict, and various other international commitments. It was during the South African War that Canadian Indians made concerted efforts to enlist as private soldiers in the military forces of Canada for the first time. Although raised as early as 1892, the Ohsweken (Six Nations) company of the 37th Haldimand Battalion of Rifles, were unsuccessful in their attempts to participate as a unit, and attempts in 1896 to organize an entire militia regiment exclusively from among Grand River Iroquois volunteers had likewise been unsuccessful. However, while records for Métis and Inuit enlistments are incomplete or were never properly kept track of to begin with, among status Indians alone (i.e., those considered to be legally 'Indians' within the meaning of the federal Indian Act legislation), more than 4,000 volunteered for service overseas during the First World War, and more than 3,000 in the Second World War. This despite the fact that status Indians did not receive the unrestricted right to vote federally - and thus did not enjoy the full range of the political, legal and civil rights of Canadian citizenship - until 1960.

The process by which Aboriginals began to undertake paid individual employment in support of colonial and Dominion military expeditions was complex and occurred gradually as Native peoples and communities were increasingly exposed to the wage economy. Initially hired at the time of the Red River Rebellion in 1870, and later during the Nile Expedition of 1884-85, as civilian labourers possessing boat handling and river navigation skills, it would only be toward the end of the nineteenth century that Natives began considering enlisting as soldiers in Dominion military forces.

This transition occurred as Aboriginal traditions stressing collective action and group rights were eroded and modified in the face of the continuing process of colonization. Up to and including the War of 1812, when and where warriors took to the field, they had done so under their own indigenous leadership, and usually any pay or compensation with which they might be rewarded was given over directly by Indian Department officers to the war chiefs. Among their duties and obligations was the equitable distribution of any such monies among the individual fighters involved. However, as Native people made tentative efforts to follow more settled agricultural or limited industrial pursuits they increasingly adopted the notion of the private accumulation of wealth. By the time of the Rebellions in the Canadas during 1837-38, a growing number had accepted that, just as the individual might accumulate wealth or receive a wage privately in exchange for their labour, so too, in regard to militia service, each soldier might receive his pay as an individual rather than as a member of a group.

Thus individual enlistment became the norm. However, by the second year of the First World War, after the initial outpouring of patriotism and pro-imperialist hysteria had worn off, as the casualty lists grew ever longer and the number of volunteers dwindled, there began a controversial campaign to recruit, train and equip entire battalions of status Indians for service overseas. For various reasons, these plans were never carried through to completion, but two battalions - the 107th Pioneer 'Timber Wolf' Battalion, and the 114th Battalion, 'Brock's Rangers') - saw service as the only two Canadian Expeditionary Force battalions largely manned and officered by Canadian Indians and Métis.

Support for Native military involvement in the First World War, as extensive as it ultimately was, was by no means universal. The cultural, political, legal and economic pressures to participate or not participate were extreme, and before the War ended had served to divide communities and families. The leadership in some communities objected strenuously to the presence of military recruiters on reserve lands, while in bureaucratic and administrative circles there was for a time confusion as to whether or not conscripted service under the 1917 Military Service Act applied to status Indians. It was ultimately determined that conscription would not apply to status Indians.

Successive Indian Act amendments in force between 1884 and 1951 placed restrictions on Indian travel, the raising of funds in payment of legal advice, and the perpetuation of cultural practices including spiritual observances and the wearing of traditional dress. Moreover, even following their service during the First World War, Native people made only the most limited of gains relative to their economic circumstances generally, while various Indian Act amendments introduced in the years after the war, if anything, represented a net loss to the sum total of their rights base.

(It is worth noting that, while status Indian enlistments during the First World War were in excess of four thousand, during the Second War enlistments would actually be fewer, with slightly more than three thousand recorded. Although further research needs to be undertaken with regard to the significance of these figures, it may be that the knowledge of their unequal treatment following their return home from the First War had at least some effect in discouraging enlistments during the Second.)

In an effort to combat new Indian Act restrictions, in 1919 a Mohawk from the Six Nations of the Grand River, Lieutenant Frederick Ogilvie Loft, who had served with the Canadian Forestry Corps, founded the League of Indians of Canada, the first national Native political organization in the country, and a forerunner to modern-day organizations like the Assembly of First Nations (the former National Indian Brotherhood). The League's political activities (which were entirely self-funded) in agitating for Indian rights and political and legal reform soon became irritating to the federal government. Indian Affairs officials expressed concerns that the League was somehow connected with leftist workers' organizations like the International Workers of the World (IWW), the 'One Big Union' (OBU), or simply generic 'Bolsheviks'. "The return of so many Indian soldiers who have been broadened and inspired by contact with the outside world and its affairs is bringing about radical and progressive changes in the life of the reserves," wrote an Indian Affairs spokesman.

"Radical"and "progressive" were words associated with the violent overthrow of democratic government in 1919. In 1927 the federal government imposed Indian Act amendments which attempted to limit Indian political activity. Although never fully successful, these restrictions remained in force until 1951.

By the time of the Second World War and the Korean Conflict, private recruiting leagues and lobbying groups of the kind that had pushed for the formation of all-Native units during the First World War no longer existed. On the contrary, at least initially, both the Royal Canadian Navy and Royal Canadian Air Force maintained (on paper at least) guidelines meant to effectively bar non-whites, including Indians, Inuit and Métis, from enlistment. In the end, however, Aboriginal Canadians did indeed see action in all three branches of the service during the Second World War. In January, 1945 the Indian Affairs branch issued a directive exempting from National Resources Mobilization Act (NRMA) service (i.e., conscription) band members from reserves which were signatory to numbered treaties 3, 6, 8 and 11. Nevertheless, it was found that at least 324 individuals from these communities had already volunteered for service overseas.

While many Native men and women made the collective or individual decision to join the war effort, some espoused carefully reasoned arguments in favour of neutrality. The Quebec-based Aboriginal rights organization 'le comité de Protection' maintained that status Indians were exempt from conscripted service under the 1940 NRMA, citing their inferior citizenship status under the Indian Act legislation, and the doctrine of the sovereignty of Indian nations in North America as implied in the Royal Proclamation of 1763. Reserve communities in northern Ontario argued exemptions under the terms of the Robinson-Huron and Robinson-Superior treaties of 1850 (Stevenson, 1996, 209-211).

As they had done following the First World War, Aboriginal veterans returned home in 1945 to a country which treated them in too many regards as second class Canadians, with inferior citizenship status and limited legal rights assigned to those falling within the purview of the federal Indian Act legislation. Métis communities continued to face generally impoverished economic prospects, while the federal government's administration of Inuit affairs across the far North was beset with bureaucratic inefficiencies. After having fought overseas, newly returned Aboriginal veterans, their families and communities, questioned with renewed vigour their inferior standing in Canadian society. When the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed in 1948, many of its provisions could not be said to apply to Aboriginal peoples in Canada. However, 1951 amendments to the Indian Act lifted some of the most draconian restrictions, including the former bans on potlatches and other cultural practices, and the raising of funds to pursue claims against the government.

The outbreak of the Korean Conflict saw the return to service of dozens of Aboriginal veterans of the Second World War as part of the especially-raised Canadian Army Special Force. Many others, often the sons or younger brothers of veterans and thus too young to have enlisted in 1939-45, saw Korean service as a means of broadening their own life experience, improving their economic circumstances, and attaining warrior status.

In the aftermath of the Second World War and Korea, Canada as a nation embarked upon an unprecedented period of economic growth and prosperity, and social reform, as the government played a much greater role. As had been the case following the First World War, newly returned Aboriginal veterans and their supporters were active in promoting the rights and interests of their people through various means, including political organization. A renewed international climate stressing the self-determination of peoples within liberal-democratic states provided them with increased leverage in advancing their claims for enhanced legal, political and economic rights. In 1960 status Indians received the unrestricted right to vote federally and subsequent gains were made throughout the 1960s and '70s, although women continued to lose their legal Indian status upon marriage to non-Indian men until the passage of Bill C-31 in 1985. The Constitution Act, 1982, enshrined legal recognition of Aboriginal and treaty rights in Canada, and recognized the Aboriginal peoples as including the Indians, Inuit and Métis populations.

The provisions of the Veterans' Charter, however, - that package of benefits and entitlements bestowed upon newly returned veterans by a grateful nation following the Second World War - were in some cases unequally applied to newly returned status Indian servicemen and women. Geographic isolation, difficulties in communication, and bureaucratic confusions arising from the split jurisdictions to which Indian veterans were subject - Indian Affairs Branch, Department of Veterans' Affairs, and National Defence - in numerous instances prevented individuals from receiving the full range of benefits to which they might have been entitled. At the time of writing the resolution of such claims remains an outstanding issue among Aboriginal veterans, their families, and their communities.

CHAPTER 4

REBELLIONS, RAIDS AND RIEL, 1837-1871

In the years following the Treaty of Ghent, which provided for joint commissions to mediate boundary disputes, and the Rush-Bagot Convention of 1817 limiting naval forces on the Great Lakes, the possibility of further conflicts between Great Britain and the United States became infinitely less likely and the most serious threat to Canada receded, thus eliminating any possibility of the long-sought Indian 'buffer state.' In any case, disillusioned chiefs such as the Anishinabeg leader, Pazhekezhikquashkum, had their own interpretation of Anglo-American relations according to Moravian missionary John Heckeweider.

> By the construction of this instrument [Treaty of Ghent] they said, it would appear as if in shutting [the border] these two sharp knives would strike together and destroy each other's edges; but no such thing: they only cut what comes between them. And this the English and Americans do when they go to war against one another. It is not each other they want to destroy, but us poor Indians that are between them. By this means they get our land, and, when that is obtained, the scissors are closed again and laid aside for further use.

However, there would be no more Anglo-American or Canadian-American military conflicts and no further occasion for the use of any 'scissors.' Instead, during the rest of the nineteenth century all the fighting in Canada would be limited to the suppression of rebellions and the repulse of 'Patriot Hunter' and Fenian raids launched from the United States but not sponsored by Washington.

The Rebellions of 1837-38

The outbreak of those violent political protests to be known as the Rebellions of 1837-38 in Upper and Lower Canada followed years of increasingly inflammatory rhetoric from small but vocal minorities of agitators within the respective provinces. In each instance there were calls by radical reformers - labelled *patriotes* in Lower Canada - for the elimination of patronage-riddled, non-democratic administrative systems and their replacement with American-style republican governments. The clashes in Lower Canada ultimately proved the more violent affairs because of the added religious and racial (i.e. ethnic and linguistic) dimensions which were not present within the Upper Canadian context.

The risings in the two provinces were supposed to be co-ordinated, but, in the event, that in Lower Canada went off at half-cock. The *patriotes* had more men than weapons and the first overt act of rebellion came on November 4, 1837, when a group of seventy-five of them, under the command of Joseph-Narcisse Cardinal, came to grief while harassing loyal Caughnawagas. In his *Rebellion: The Rising in French Canada 1837*, Joseph Schull recounts what happened.

> An Indian woman, chasing a stray cow, had seen the approach of the party and had run to inform the chief. She found him at early mass, and there had been a prompt exodus from the church. By the time the *patriotes* entered the road to the village, the woods on either side were thick with Indians. The chief appeared alone, grave and

> inquiring. What was the purpose of this unannounced visit? He was gravely informed by Cardinal of the *patriotes* need of weapons. By what authority, the chief asked, was such a request made? "By this," Cardinal replied, whipping a pistol from his pocket and pointing it at the chief's head.
>
> It was his last warlike gesture. The chief's hand shot out to knock the pistol aside. A blood-curdling war-whoop shattered the Sunday calm, and a hundred armed braves were around the *patriotes*. Of the seventy-five who came, only eleven escaped, and the chief was prompt in his disposition of the others.... By mid morning the warriors from Caughnawaga had crossed over to Lachine to deliver sixty-four rebels to the Lachine volunteer cavalry....

Two days later, a group of *patriotes* calling themselves *Les Fils de la Liberté* exchanged blows (delivered mostly with stones and ax handles) in the streets of Montreal with members of the loyalist Doric Club. The Riot Act was read and British troops quickly restored order on that occasion, but civil unrest was growing and open conflict seemed inevitable. On 16 November the authorities issued warrants for the arrest of 26 *patriote* leaders. After taking two of them into custody, a troop of newly-formed volunteer cavalry returning from St. Jean d'Iberville was fired upon near Longueil and several troopers wounded as the attackers freed the two prisoners. 'Blood has been shed at last,' rejoiced a Montreal newspaper, 'by rebels who now stand unmasked ....' British garrison troops then took the field, accompanied by loyalist militia but apparently without any Indian allies. After an initial rebuff at St. Denis on 23 November, they soundly defeated a *patriote* force at St. Charles on 25 November, and in mid-December thrashed a rebel 'army' at St. Eustache. Seventy rebels were killed in this last engagement and the rising in Lower Canada was virtually over only a week after that in Upper Canada had begun.

Contingents of Native warriors from Kahnawake (Caughnawaga), Akwesasne (St. Regis) and Kanesatake (Oka), had been mustered to assist in suppressing it. Early in November 1837 a group of fifty Mohawks from Akwesasne served alongside white militiamen dispatched from Cornwall in Upper Canada, and volunteers from the town of Huntington, during counter-insurgency operations along the Chateauguay. A day or so before the fight at St. Eustache, when it still seemed that there might be much fighting to be done, about two hundred Kahnawake braves joined loyalist forces around Montreal and Lachine. 'Every Warrior in Caughnawaga was crossing to join the Lachine Brigade,' recalled John Fraser, one of its white members. 'A cheer of welcome from the ... band of Volunteers greeted the arrival of the Indian Warriors.' In the event, their services were not needed.

Such as they were, the principal incidents - clashes would be too strong a word - in Upper Canada were the laughable encounter of rebels and loyalists at what is now the vicinity of Yonge and Dundas Streets in Toronto as the rebels marched south to take control of the provincial capital - 'what ensued was pure comedy: each side discharged their muskets and turned and fled in great precipitation in opposite directions' - and the subsequent skirmishing around Montgomery's Tavern, a few kilometres further north that resulted in the deaths of a dozen rebels and the wounding of twice that number; the rapid dispersal (without any fighting at all) of the London District rebels; the rebel seizure of Navy Island, in the Niagara river; the so-called Battle of the Short Hills, at St. John's on the Niagara escarpment west, of Thorold; the capture and burning of the American steamer *Caroline*, which had been supplying the Navy Island rebels, by white loyalists; and abortive raids on Pelee Island and Windsor.

The government expected the support of aboriginal communities. An order circulated by John Macaulay, civil secretary for Upper Canada, in November 1838, directed colonial officials that:

> The extensive organization of a force within the U.S. Frontier for the purpose of invading their *[sic]* Province having become fully known to the Lt. Governor I am directed to request, that you will hold the Indians in your neighbourhood in readiness to take to the field & act with promptitude & effect under your command on the first notice, which you may receive of actual invasion by a foreign enemy or of insurrection in expectation of foreign aid, in any part of the province.

Understandably, not all Aboriginals were that keen on fighting the white man's battles. Disciples of Pazhekezhikquashkum at the St. Clair Mission (present-day Sarnia, Ontario) told their people:

> ... we consider it best to spread our matts to sit-down & smoke our pipes and to let the people who like powder & ball fight their own battles. We have some time go counselled with the Indians around us & we are all agreed to remain quiet and we hope that all the Indians will do so, as we can gain nothing by fighting but may lose everything .... Should such as are ... foolish be induced to commence war on the whites of any party, we should all be more hated by the whites than we are now. We would just observe that we cannot be compelled to go & fight for any party, we mention this fact in order that should you be called on you may know that you are free men & under the control of no one who has authority to make you take up arms.

Some loyalists feared, nevertheless, that even if the Indians did not join the rebels they might rise on their own behalf. Rumour was rife. 'A report has reached us that 400 Indians had come down on Toronto and slaughtered a number of the inhabitants - this seems to be unfounded,' wrote diarist Catherine Parr Traill on 7 December. In fact, most were enthusiastic supporters of the existing government, fearing the effect on their life-styles of any kind of Americanization. 'Five hundred Mohawks and Hurons have joined our [Loyalist] party, and Colonel Anderson from Rice Lake has led up 170 Rice Lake Indians. Parties [of Indians] are arriving constantly from the back townships,' concluded Mrs. Traill.

Grand River Iroquois under the mixed race William Johnson Kerr, and Tyendinaga (Deseronto) Mohawks under John Culbertson, helped suppress both domestic rebels and American-based 'Patriots,' for the most part consisting of men who sincerely believed in the merits of republican government and American expansionism, but with a heavy sprinkling of alcoholic adventurers in their ranks. Kerr was an especially ardent Tory, and in fact had been convicted and fined some years previously for his role in orchestrating a beating of William Lyon Mackenzie, the diminutive Upper Canadian reform leader, following a political rally in Hamilton - an attack which had nearly cost the reform agitator his life. Kerr proudly reported that, 'the Indian Warriors turned out with alacrity, and joined their Brethren the Militia in defence of the Country, its laws and institutions, at a period when there were no regular troops in the Country ... to their honor be it spoken, they have neither Indian Radicals nor Indian Rebels amongst them.' His men participated in hunting down the forty rebels who wounded a militiamen at Osterhout's tavern in St. John's, after Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Townshend, the British officer commanding the Niagara frontier had appealed for their assistance. 'Strong measures are decidedly necessary, and unless Indians are employed to ferret them out of their hiding places, or Martial Law proclaimed, I fear their plans are not likely to be frustrated.'

At Brantford, the Reverend Abraham Nelles noted on 7 January 1838 that he had only '12 communicants, the number is so small because of the Indian men all being away at Chippewa having been called out to defend the Country from a rebel army which has taken possession of Navy Island.'

Tyendinaga could provide enough men to form a rifle company, although whether it was actually formed is unclear. Anthony Manahan, a white Militia officer, wrote to Colonel James FitzGibbon explaining that 'a band of Indians here with Chief John Culbertson ... have expressed a wish to join my Regiment as a Volunteer Rifle Company under Culbertson as their captain .... I beg you think favourably of the Indian Rifle Company - Such a company will do more than a Regiment of Regular Infantry to reduce the turbulent, by the fears they entertain [of Indian warriors].'

Sir George Arthur, who succeeded Francis Bond Head as lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada, subsequently wrote to Lord Glenelg, the Colonial Secretary in England, explaining and justifying the employment of Aboriginal warriors.

> In more than one instance since last Autumn have the Indians been called out in defence of the Country. They furnished a large force to protect the Niagara Frontier last winter, when it was menaced by the armed assemblage of Canadian Refugees, and American adventurers, who had taken possession of Navy Island; and on that occasion, as well as on others when their services were required by my predecessor, their conduct was perfectly unexceptionable.
>
> In employing them in the month of June last, I had it for my Chief object to cut off the communication between the mixed band of brigands and insurgents, who were in arms at the Short Hills, and the disaffected portion of the London and Talbot Districts, and to intercept all fugitives. The Indians were thus employed on a duty for which they were peculiarly well qualified ....
> The Warriors of these tribes, who promptly obeyed my summons, were under the guidance of human leaders who readily enforced my earnest injunctions for the maintenance of the Strictest order and a scrupulous observance of the merciful rules of civilized warfare ....

Bands of Ojibwa from around Lakes Huron and Simcoe under the leadership of Musquakie, also known as William Yellowhead, encamped at Holland Landing to guard the Yonge Street military corridor running northward from York to Lake Simcoe. Other local groups at the Narrows (present-day Orillia, Ontario) mobilized under their leader John Aisance, ready to come to the assistance of the Crown if needed.

Twenty-seven soldiers and nearly three hundred rebels were killed in the Lower Canada campaign, far fewer in the Upper Canada one. In Lower Canada, twelve rebels went to the gallows while 58 were exiled to the British penal colony in Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania), off the south-eastern shore of Australia. In the upper province, only two rebels were sentenced to death, although many more were sentenced to death but later pardoned. One was hanged and the other died in prison while awaiting execution. Lesser leaders joined their Lower Canadian brethren in Van Diemens' Land and all those who survived that experience were eventually pardoned, although not all chose to return to Canada. The instigators - Louis-Joseph Papineau in Lower Canada and Mackenzie and Charles Duncombe in Upper Canada - escaped to the United States. Papineau and Mackenzie were eventually pardoned and returned to Canada, while Duncombe died in California.

Battle of the Windmill

Not part of the internal rebellions, but following hard on their heels came the Battle of the Windmill, near Prescott, on the Canadian shore of the St. Lawrence, in November 1838. Some two hundred Americans, either devoted to the idea of republican government or hoping for loot, and mistakenly believing that they would be welcomed by many Canadians, crossed the river and established themselves in the windmill and surrounding stone houses on Windmill Point. Killing or capturing these 'Patriot Hunters,' as they called themselves, took a combination of British regulars and Canadian militiamen six days and cost them three officers and fourteen men killed and some sixty wounded. The invaders, fighting mostly from the cover of stone walls, lost 45 killed or wounded. Essential to the victory was British artillery and ammunition to blast down the stone walls, brought from Kingston on barges at least partly manned by Tyendinaga Mohawks, 'all most anxious for an opportunity to try the accuracy of their aim upon the pretend Patriots,' (The ringleaders of this incursion, too, were subsequently hanged or deported to Van Diemen's Land).

A principal employment of Native warriors at the time was to patrol the water frontiers of Upper and Lower Canada, *i.e.* the St. Lawrence shore, the Great Lakes coasts, and contiguous inland waterways. In addition to providing advance warning of suspicious activity, they were useful in apprehending deserters from British military garrisons and outposts. While such deserters had been a perennial problem for military commanders from the early eighteenth century onward, the bounties paid for their return provided casual but steady income to communities located near British posts. 'And I do promise ... neither I nor any of my tribe shall in any manner entice any of his said Majesty's troops or soldiers to desert, nor in any manner assist in conveying them away, but on the contrary will do our utmost endeavours to bring them back to the Company, Regiment, Fort or Garrison to which they shall belong.' It was in return for such services that Aboriginal communities continued to receive annual presents until the withdrawal of the British garrisons in the 1870s.

The 'Aroostook War'

The so-called "Aroostook War" along the then poorly-defined Maine-New Brunswick boundary followed the earlier rebel, *patriote* and Patriot Hunter disturbances in Upper and Lower Canada. At the height of border friction over the winter of 1838-39, which were centred around the Aroostook River valley, and to which both British and American troops were ultimately dispatched, New Brunswick Malecite leader Francis Tomah assured the provincial lieutenant-governor, Sir John Harvey, that those Native bands resident across the disputed trans-boundary region were firmly committed to the British cause; and furthermore that the colony could count on Malecite support should circumstances so necessitate. In the end, however, these particular tensions, which largely had to do with rights of access to potentially lucrative stands of timber resources, and the maintenance of unimpeded lines of transport and communication between the adjacent British colonies, were dispelled under the terms of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842. Subsequently, a special 'Ashburton Treaty medal' was struck and awarded to Malecite and other eastern Aboriginals in recognition of their work as guides and hunters in support of the colonial surveying parties charged with the final determination of the newly-confirmed international boundary.

Rupert's Land and the Arctic

However, by the mid-1840s Great Britain was once again embroiled in boundary quarrels with the United States, this time stretching from across the prairies to the Oregon Territory and the Pacific coast. In 1845, during the Oregon Dispute, Sir George Simpson, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) governor for Rupert's Land - a vast territory encompassing the entire watershed of Hudson's Bay - advocated that parties of Métis be organized for local defence in conjunction with units of Royal Marines and Royal Navy warships along the Pacific coast, and other companies of mounted Métis and Indian riflemen be organized to serve alongside the regular forces which were to be dispatched to the Red River district.

During the westward and northward expansion of Dominion government, paramilitary organizations like the North-West Mounted Police and undertakings like the surveys of the British North American Boundary Commission routinely engaged local Aboriginal people, both men and women, as civilian scouts, guides, trackers, outfitters, teamsters, and translators. The mixed-race Gerry Potts was the most famous of such scouts engaged by the police; while the self-styled '49th Rangers' (after the 49th Parallel of latitude which marked the border from the Lake of the Woods to the Pacific Ocean) was the most colourful of such units, being composed of Red River Métis raised to provide an armed mounted escort to the civilian and military survey engineers of the Boundary Commission in 1872-74. Across much of present-day Canada, from the 1840's to the end of the nineteenth century, from the prairies to the Northwest coast, *ad hoc* local units of Indian and Métis volunteers, variously styled as home guard units, Native constabulary, or simply militia, were organized in response to particular local circumstances and perceived threats. These ranged from providing aid to the civil power in apprehending fugitives from colonial law to countering feared Russian, American or Fenian invasions. When such situations arose, the motives of those aboriginal individuals and groups who cooperated with colonial authorities against fellow Aboriginals were complex and varied. They ranged from a desire to act against traditional enemies to the conviction held by community leaders or individuals that the advent of Crown sovereignty would in fact ultimately be a stabilizing influence on regional inter-tribal rivalries.

Exploring the North

Various Imperial, and later post-Confederation, national development initiatives throughout the nineteenth century were facilitated by the expert local knowledge shared by Aboriginal peoples, and by the adaptation or modification of indigenous innovations in transportation and clothing technology. Such expeditions included naval exploration of the Arctic and Royal Engineers' construction and surveying projects in eastern and central Canada, and across the prairies to the Rocky Mountains and beyond.

A notable participant in the exploration of the Canadian North was Pierre St. Germain, a Métis of French and Dene descent. Born about 1790, St. Germain served as a *voyageur* with the

North-West Company from 1812 until 1818. He switched to the service of the HBC in 1819, and a year later, in June of 1820, signed-on as one of fifteen hired men engaged by Sir John Franklin in furtherance of his first Arctic land expedition. The expedition, however, went badly wrong from the start. Originally charged with mapping the Arctic coastline in concert with a ship borne expedition, Franklin's party was soon faced with an absence of game and the loss of many of its boats. St. Germain was instrumental in securing such limited quantities of game as were to be found, and he displayed much ingenuity and resourcefulness in fashioning makeshift canoes and other expedient water craft from the remains of the damaged naval boats. Had it not been for his hunting skills and bushcraft, it is likely that the entire party would have perished. In the end, there were only five survivors out of an original party of 23.

Aboriginals were instrumental in facilitating the mapping and exploration of the North. Under the authority of Admiralty order No. 469, issued on January 28, 1859, the Arctic Medal 1818-1855 was retroactively granted to all officers and men in the employ of the HBC who had aided in British naval expeditions to the Canadian Arctic between the dates indicated. These included numerous searches for Sir John Franklin and the crews of his *Erebus* and *Terror*, who all went missing in 1845 and were never seen alive again - although over the years a number of artefacts and skeletons have been found.

The nominal rolls listing the recipients of this Arctic Medal read like a who's who of Métis, Iroquois and other Aboriginal families who, by mid-century, had already established a long tradition of service as *voyageurs* and boatmen in the employ of the Company. Among the names included are Iroquois such as Charles Arahota, Ignace Montour, and Thomas Karahotan; Cree, Ojibwa and Algonkin names like Pierre Kanaquasse, Thomas Misteagun and John Nooquay; and well-known Métis family names including Kirkness, Desjurlais, Fidler, Isbister, St. Pierre, and Rondeau. Particularly noteworthy was the Métis, William Kennedy, a one-time HBC fur trader who was the son of a Cree woman and an HBC factor. Kennedy had spent much of his career along the Labrador coast and was personally selected by Lady Jane Franklin to lead a privately funded search expedition in search of her husband in 1851-52, in concert with a French naval officer, Joseph René Bellot. Their expedition was no more successful in determining the fate of Franklin and his men than were previous or subsequent attempts until the twentieth century, but it remains unique by the standards of the time in having been led by an Aboriginal Canadian.

The Volunteer Militia

By 1855 the old, unpaid, Sedentary Militia had fallen into desuetude and the government of the Canadas - Upper and Lower Canada had been re-united as Canada East and Canada West in 1840 - felt it necessary to introduce a new Militia Act, retaining the principle of universal unpaid military service which could be called upon in times of emergency, but also creating a new Active or Volunteer Militia, 5,000 strong, who would be equipped by the government and paid to train ten days a year. The threat of American expansionism soon led to that authorized strength being doubled. Suddenly militia service was fashionable, and the new units soon achieved considerable social status as exclusive men's clubs, competing with each other in drill and shooting. Often, men were expected to donate their pay to the unit, to be used for purchasing trophies or uniform adornments, or paying for regimental dinners. By 1862 the Maritime colones had followed suit, 'so that there were soon 18,000 of them happily parading in their spare time in towns and cities all across British North America.' The key words in that quotation are 'towns and cities.' There were a few relatively rural units, with companies based in different villages, but most were established at battalion strength in the larger centres of population where it was easier to gather men together. All of this tended to marginalize aboriginals, whose services had always been, in principle, freely offered in the past. There would be no more primarily aboriginal units until the creation of the Canadian Rangers during the Cold War era.

Fenian Raids

The next threat to Canada came from the Fenian Brotherhood through a series of raids that began in 1866, shortly after the American Civil War had ended, and lasted until 1871. The Fenians were recruited from Irish-American nationalists (including many Civil War veterans) who were committed to occupying all or part of Canada in order to bring pressure on the British government to grant Irish independence. Their effectiveness was much impeded by a major schism in their leadership, by the distinctly unco-operative attitude adopted by the Federal authorities in Washington, and by the fact that the chief lieutenant and *confidante* of their overall commander, 'General' Thomas O'Neill, was a British spy, Thomas Billis Beach, posing as a Frenchman and known in the Fenian ranks as Henri Le Caron. Nevertheless, while in many historical accounts the Fenians are downplayed to the extent that they appear as actors in a comic opera - as do the Canadian militia who responded to their incursions - the threat they posed was a central impetus in convincing the Canadian and Maritime colonies in British North America to federate and establish a union - the Dominion of Canada - with the purpose of projecting a common defence against any further incursions from the south.

By this time, however, the Volunteer movement was in full swing and there was little need or occasion for communal aboriginal help in the eastern provinces. Nor were circumstances generally conducive to the kind of warfare in which the Indians had always excelled. The little fighting that occurred took place on relatively open ground in a travesty of formal 'white man's' warfare, and there was little or no requirement for their bushland and riverine skills in transportation. Railways and steamboats handled much of that. Their hearts were mostly in the right place, however. 'The enemies of Canady *[sic]* must be driven back,' said Grandmother Highfly, a clan mother of the Delawares, one of the bands resident among the Six Nations of the Grand River. 'In this us Indians must have a part.' The Delaware and Cayuga bands organized a home guard for local defence, although their subsequent efforts to formally incorporate as a Volunteer company would continue to be unsuccessful until the 1890's.

Many Indians joined Volunteer units, one such being the Mohawk, Oronhyatekha, or Peter Martin. Born on the Grand River tract in 1841, Martin, under the patronage of influential Englishmen, undertook medical studies at Oxford, in Great Britain, commencing in 1860. Returning to Canada three years later and continuing his education at the University of Toronto, Martin in 1864 became active in the 2nd Battalion "The Queen's Own Rifles of Toronto." Like many other ambitious and well-to-do Confederation-era Canadian males, Oronhyatekha (more formally Dr. Oronhyatekha, MD, and subsequently a leading figure in the fraternal and benevolent association, the Independent Order of Foresters) saw Volunteer service as a means of advancing his own personal, professional, and business interests. Whether he was with the Queen's Own at the Ridgeway fiasco, when about a thousand Volunteers were defeated by eight hundred Fenians, is not known, but he very probably was. Despite their tactical success at Ridgeway, the Fenians, lacking numbers and the local support they had been relying on, soon returned to the American shore of the

Niagara river. In other Fenian incursions along the Quebec border, the invaders stayed only briefly on Canadian soil, departing in the face of a threat from much larger numbers of approaching Volunteers and British regulars.

Aboriginals, and Métis in particular, were able to play a somewhat larger part in the west. In 1871 a potentially serious threat faced the newly-created province of Manitoba, where there was, as yet, no organized militia to resist incursions from the south. Usually labelled as a Fenian raid, this attack was hardly that, as it was never approved by the council of the Fenian Brotherhood. It was inspired and organized by William O'Donahue, the one-time treasurer of Louis Riel's short-lived provisional government. His objective was to de-stabilize the Canadian government, as a component of the British Empire, and he managed to secure the support of a number of Fenians, including 'General' O'Neill, the victor at Ridgeway, his accession in particular giving the movement some Fenian status.

O'Donahue, of course, was relying on the dissatisfaction with Ottawa he believed prevalent among the Red River Métis. However, with the passage of the Manitoba Act in 1870 a formal offer of Métis assistance in countering the Fenian threat was, after due deliberation, tendered under the political leadership of Louis Riel. In a formal declaration of loyalty, the Métis parishes of the Red River decided that:

> ...(1) being subjects of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, we believe it our duty to obey her, (2) that having received, through her representative, orders to meet to fight the Fenians, we do so and are resolved to follow the order which competent authorities shall give.

Irregular units of Métis horsemen acting as mounted infantry were to be mobilized in small units based upon methods adapted from the Métis buffalo hunt, with elected 'captains' leading their mounted squads or platoons of ten 'soldiers' each. 'Generally I hear it said that the English are really frightened,' reported a St. Boniface clergyman. 'If the Fenians really number 1,500, only the Métis horsemen can stop them. The English have said that the Métis count for nothing; now they are going to find out [what they do count for].

On 6 October, a day after the raiders, perhaps 75 strong, crossed the border and occupied the Canadian Customs House and a HBC store (and a day before the Métis declaration of loyalty quoted above) a militia force that included 'a company of Canadians and half-breed French' was organized in Fort Garry and sent south towards the border. Their services would not be needed, however. O'Neill and his men were looting the HBC store when he learned from a panicky sentry that 'American forces are coming.' On this occasion the United States Army took the form of thirty men in two wagons, under the command of the officer in charge of the American fort at Pembina advancing at the gallop onto Canadian soil. Even if they had been brave enough to do so, the Fenians would never have dared fire on their own troops, and they fled the scene, scattering in all directions. Many of them were subsequently arrested by the American authorities, some by the Fort Garry militia, while O'Donahue himself was captured by loyal Métis. All the Canadian prisoners were subsequently handed over to the Americans but none of the raiders were ever brought to trial.

The Red River Expedition

The passage of the Manitoba Act in 1870 brought Rupert's Land into Confederation and established rules and regulations by which the rights and practices of Métis families might be secured in the new province. However, these rules were not properly implemented and many grievances and claims of entitlement continued unabated, leading to Riel's establishment of a provisional Métis government. The Red River Expedition, under command of British regular officer, Colonel Garnet Wolseley, was dispatched from Ottawa to Fort Garry (Winnipeg) at the behest of the federal government to reassert Crown authority. Mohawks, Plains and Swampy Cree, and a considerable number of Ontario and Quebec Métis, were among the nearly four hundred civilians contracted to transport the troops and their equipment.

The presence and participation of experienced Aboriginal boatmen and *voyageurs* in the ranks of the Expedition's transportation corps was fundamental to its successful outcome. Wolseley had become familiar with the capabilities of Kahnawake Mohawk boatmen in particular in 1862 when, as a lieutenant-colonel, he had been assigned as an instructor to the Militia officers' training school at La Prairie, across the St. Lawrence from Montreal, and adjacent to the Kahnawake reserve. Now he called upon Simon Dawson, a Dominion land surveyor and civil engineer, to make the transportation arrangements for the Expeditionary Force, including the recruitment of some 140 Indian and Métis *voyageurs*.

The successful movement of some four hundred British regulars and seven hundred militiamen with all their necessary equipment and supplies, from Collingwood, on Georgian Bay, to Fort Garry without the loss of a single man, was a logistical triumph during which the Expedition traversed 47 portages and ran some 82 kilometres of rapids. As for the *voyageurs*, 'their patience and endurance, under toil which they believed to be unnecessary and arising from a mistake, cannot be too highly commended,' wrote Dawson. Another paean of praise came from Lieutenant Henry Riddell of the British 60th (The King's Royal Rifle Corps). 'Fortunate was the officer who secured for his boat the skilful Iroquois, the finest boatmen in Canada.'

Curiously, Wolseley himself, in his own contemporary writings, seems to have had little to say about his old-time friends, who were under the overall command of Ignace Montour. His failure to pay them more attention at the time - he would recall them in the most sterling terms when he needed boatmen on the Nile in 1884 - may have had something to do with his disagreements with Simon Dawson over the best route from Lake Superior to Lake of the Woods. Dawson, rightly, favoured the old Grand Portage route that lay along the United States border as being much easier. That is what he meant when he wrote of 'toil which they believed to be unnecessary and arising from a mistake.'

Captain John Young, the regular officer Wolseley sent to reconnoitre an early (and worst) section of his chosen route, a short stretch up the Matawin river from Young's Landing - so-called for obvious reasons - to Oskondagee Creek, made his first attempt at mastering it in a boat manned by soldiers and found it impassable. Simon Dawson then stepped into the breach.

> Some interest had been excited by this experiment, which it was said was designed to show how much could be effected in the rapids independently of the voyageurs. Before the discouraging effects of this failure could spread far I had sent forward a

> band of voyageurs who took up the boats and, for that time forward, the boats, in this difficult section, were manned wholly by voyageurs.

Dawson subsequently arranged for Donald McKellar of Fort William to 'go up to the Matawin station and get the boats up the Matawin and Shebandowan rivers to the Oskondagee,' telling him at the same time to 'make sure you get the best [men], so that you will be sure to open up this route.' McKellar selected 'ten Iroquois from Kahnawake, ten Sault Ste. Marie Indians, and ten Ojibways from Fort William' and accomplished the feat in a day, to the surprise of all the military masterminds who held that it could not be done at all.

'Almost everybody was pleased,' noted Stanley. 'Almost, but not all. For some reason - could it have been jealousy or annoyance? - Wolseley made no mention of the *voyageurs*' accomplishments in the account of the expedition he published a year later in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*.' However, he did admit, grudgingly perhaps, in his *Journal of Operations* that 'situated as the force now is, it is completely at the mercy of these Indians, nothing can be taken up the rapids [to Shebandowan Lake] without their assistance, and when they have made three trips they consider that they have done a day's work, no matter what time of day it may be. They are, however, capital men and very civil.'

The worst of the long journey to Fort Garry by boat was now over, but the *voyageurs* were kept busy lining boats through the occasional rapids and laying skids on which to drag the boats over the inevitable portages. The Expeditionary Force was divided into 21 'brigades,' each consisting of about fifty men. Each boat carried ten or twelve soldiers, with a *voyageur* bowman and steersman. There were also three *canots de maître* and a number of smaller birchbark canoes manned by *voyageurs*. One of these canoes, manned by Indians, was Wolseley's personal choice of transport. In it he could move rapidly from one end of the line of march to the other. Much later in life, in his autobiography *A Soldier's Life*, he recalled the phenomenal skills of his Indian boatmen. His account of the descent of Slave Falls bears repeating.

> The portage by which travellers ... take their canoes round these falls begins some few hundred yards above them, and is reached without danger. But to my horror the guide took my canoe into midstream where the current runs down a considerable decline at a most exciting pace. My first wild notion was that he had mistaken these falls for some others, and that nothing could then save us. I sat motionless, speechless and awe-stricken as we raced along the last and swiftest decline into the columns of mist and spray, which rising from below seemed to mark point where the water jumped from the edge of the falls into the steaming, frothing jumble of bubbling foam and boisterous water below. My bowman was a portly Iroquois whom I did not like much, but he had a jowl that bespoke courageous determination to a remarkable degree. As he dipped his broad paddle far out into the stream to draw the canoe hard over after it, he had, like most Indians when excited, thrown off his hat, and as his long straight hair flew back behind his neck and shoulders, I saw his face clearly. It was enough. His lips closely pressed together, and there was an unmistakable expression of satisfied determination, of assured triumph, about him that said without words, 'All is well.' .... Nothing pleases or satisfies these Iroquois

> more than such trials of strength, such victories over dangerous water, which is truly their element.

One of the militiamen on the Expedition was Samuel Benfleet Steele, subsequently to become famous as Sam Steele, the Mounted Policeman in the Klondike gold rush, the commanding officer of the Strathcona's Horse in the South African War, and (briefly) as commander of the 2nd Canadian Division in the First World War. Steele also paid tribute to the skill of one of the Kahnawake boatmen in recounting his exciting run through the Grande Décharge rapids.

> Big Mike, the powerful and skilful Iroquois, although of Major McLeod's boat, took the bow of ours also .... I had the stroke oar (we took turns at it), and, as we approached the crest, set the pace, but just as we passed over it, rowing our best, Neil's oar snapped like a pipestem and the boat swung into the tremendous waves on our right, rolling and pitching over them and hurling several of the crew from their oars into the bottom of the boat .... We were quite helpless, and death stared us in the face as we surged past the rocks and whirlpools at a great speed, while Big Mike stood towering in the bow wielding a heavy oar as if it were a light paddle. His long hair streamed in the wind, his coal black eyes glared at the angry waters, and he handled his oar with such effect that the boat came safely through, landing us far below, and his compatriots ... who were watching the outcome with great anxiety, joined him in wild whoops and the shrieks of triumphant laughter.

Upon the Expedition's arrival at Fort Garry, Wolseley found a band of one hundred Swampy Cree warriors under the leadership of their chief, Henry Prince, son of the late Chief Peguis, willing to assist him in restoring Crown authority. The offer of so large a group was declined, but over the following winter, Prince detailed a squad of twelve of his men to remain behind as guards at Lower Fort Garry. Wolseley would remember Prince and call upon him for the Nile Expedition nearly fifteen years later.

CHAPTER 5

AT HOME AND ABROAD

The Nile Expedition, 1884-1885 - Background

In the early 1880s the nominally independent, politically unstable and economically bankrupt country of Egypt was being governed by the British as a protectorate. They were anxious to preserve the integrity of the newly-constructed Suez Canal which was essential to their trading empire. In the south the province of Sudan was being ravaged by the irregular forces of the Mahdi - an Islamic messiah - who sought independence from Egypt and the establishment of an Islamic republic that would eventually embrace the entire Muslim world. In January 1884 General Charles ('Chinese') Gordon was sent by the British Government to the provincial capital, Khartoum, to effect the withdrawal of the Egyptian garrison from that province. However, Khartoum was soon besieged by the Mahdi and the eccentric, free-spirited Gordon, a Christian fanatic who had ignored orders to leave, was trapped there. After much hesitation, a reluctant British Cabinet decided to mount a relief expedition and placed Major-General Sir Garnet Wolseley in command.

The lower reaches of the Nile had a light railway running along the river bank as far as Wadi Halfa, at the foot of the Second Cataract - each "cataract" consisting of a series of minor falls and rapids. From Wadi Halfa onward, through three more cataracts, all movement would have to be on foot (human or animal) or by boat, but the unladen (or lightly laden) boats would have to be worked up through those first two cataracts as well.

Wolseley had learned the value of skilled boatmen in traversing such waterways while commanding the Red River expedition of 1870. Now, one of his first acts was to ask the governor-general of Canada, Lord Lansdowne, "to endeavour to engage 300 good voyageurs from Caughnawaga, St. Regis and Manitoba as steersmen in boats for Nile expedition." They would be placed under the command of Toronto militiaman, Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick Charles Denison, a tactful, smooth-talking lawyer who had been an *aide de camp* with Wolseley on the Red River expedition of 1870. He was assisted by two other militia officers, Captains Telmont Aumond and Alexander MacRae, who lacked Denison's charm and polish but had other virtues. Aumond, the son of a prominent timber merchant, had grown up working lumber rafts through the rapids of the Ottawa and Gatineau rivers. MacRae, a "rough, hard-looking fellow" was also a knowledgeable boatman who had participated in the Red River expedition fourteen years earlier.

Much had changed in fourteen years and it was simply not possible to recruit three hundred *voyageurs*. By 1884 the canoe men who had long made a profession of transporting people and supplies over great distances had mostly yielded to the railway. Only in northern Manitoba and the North-West did the last of them still ply their trade, while some of the Caughnawaga Indians of the Montreal area still retained their skills. Expert rivermen of a different type were, however, readily available. In the woods of Quebec and Ontario, men felled trees and stacked logs on the river banks all winter; in the spring, when the ice broke, and thereafter all summer long, these "shantymen" drove great rafts of logs downstream, through many rapids to the waiting sawmills. They had a broad knowledge of river work, which was of some value, but they lacked the small boat and canoe skills of the *voyageurs*.

Canada's Contribution

Denison established a central office in Ottawa and divided the eastern country from which he intended to recruit into three districts: Ottawa, Three Rivers and Caughnawaga. The largest group came from the Ottawa region, for Ottawa was the capital of the lumber trade. Altogether, 367 men were recruited, of whom 86 were status Indians from Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba. Fifty-six of them were Mohawks from Caughnawaga, captained by Louis Jackson, who subsequently wrote a little book about their experiences entitled *Our Caughnawagas in Egypt*. As the anonymous preface noted, "There is something unique in the idea of the aborigines of the New World being sent for to teach the Egyptians how to pass the Cataracts of the Nile, which has been navigated in some way by them for thousands of years...."

Lieutenant-Colonel William Kennedy, a Winnipeg lawyer, enrolled a number of men from his 90th "Winnipeg" Battalion of Rifles, among them no less than *eight* other lawyers, presumably attracted by the prospect of adventure. After all, if Fred Denison could go, why could they not do likewise? However, he also recruited twelve excellent boatmen from the Saulteaux of St. Peter's, headed by Chief William Prince who had been described in 1870 by Captain William Butler as a "splendid canoe-man in dangerous water." (One of 'Billy' Prince's great-grandsons was to become the most famous Indian warrior of modern times.) "How many Indians had come from Winnipeg?" Butler later asked Prince, and was told "About a dozen; but had longer time and fuller notice been given, fifty or ever a hundred, would have come." As it was, too many of the contingent were willing but unskilled. Among them was Kennedy himself, who somehow wheedled his way into the contingent as a "foreman." However, he was subsequently appointed paymaster -- a post for which he was much more qualified. Surgeon-Major J.L.H. Neilson, a bilingual Permanent Force officer, was appointed to look after the contingent's physical well-being, while their spiritual needs were in the hands of a French-Canadian priest, Abbé Arthur Bouchard.

Of the total of 386 so-called *voyageurs* who finally sailed, 159 were from the Ottawa area, 92 from Manitoba, 56 from Caughnawaga, and the remainder from elsewhere in Quebec and Ontario, mainly Trois-Rivières and Peterborough. Unfortunately, the Atlantic voyage was marred by the death of one of the Saulteaux Indians. On 24 September Richard Henderson was very sick with an abscess in his ear; he died two days later and was buried at sea.

The Voyage

When the voyageurs reached Alexandria, the eight hundred open, double-ended, whalers to be used by the expedition were in the process of arriving in Egypt. The boats were constructed so as to carry ten fully equipped soldiers, a steersman and a bowsman, 200 rounds of ammunition per man and 100 days of rations for the occupants. The whalers were taken to Assiout by rail, and onwards from there as cargo in Nile barges. Below the First Cataract, at Assuan, they were put in the water. Egyptian boatmen then worked them up the rapids, and from there to Wadi Halfa, they were towed in batches by river steamers.

About five kilometres above Wadi Halfa was the foot of the Second Cataract, where Denison and his men disembarked on 26 October 1884. They were approximately halfway to Khartoum - with 1300 kilometres, four cataracts and many lesser rapids to go. Their first task was to get the empty boats up to the Bab-el-Kebir, at the head of the Second Cataract. On the first day, each crew of seven men made two trips, "some getting through early, some late."

Louis Jackson recounted his first day in the cataracts.

> The first trip I made, I took a different channel from those who started before. I stepped the two masts with which the boat was provided and used the sails and the six oars only, the wind being as usual from the north. We need all our resources but we reached the camp in good time. We walked back the three miles, took another boat, and tried the channel generally taken, it being apparently the shortest route. I had to use the tow-line at one place where there was a "gate" or channel, as we say in Canada, with about three feet of a fall, about eighteen feet wide, and a good place to tow from.

Within ten days of their arrival that task was complete. On one day, October 31, fifty-six boats were taken up by a combination of towing, rowing and sailing, each crew making three trips and each trip involving the walk back, through clinging sand and under a burning sun.

At Gemai, just above the head of the Cataract, the eight infantry battalions destined to be transported up the Nile embarked for their long journey.

> We met there thirty whalers with troops and stores ready to ascend [reported Jackson]. Colonel Denison asked me to give him one man to act as pilot, so I gave him Matthias Hill, an Iroquois.... Next day, the 7th November, another fleet of twenty-eight boats started, for which Lord Avonmore [a British officer] asked me a pilot. I gave him John Bruce of St Regis [Akwesasne].

While the majority of the *voyageurs* were working the infantry-laden whalers upstream, a small party of Caughnawaga Indians under Colonel James Alleyne was reconnoitring further on. On October 30, Alleyne, Louis Jackson, and thirty-five men set out from Sarras with six boats, "nearly light" - Jackson's boat had "about two tons of freight" on board.

> This was the time to find out what we could do with our boats, the north wind had freshened, which gave us more speed and with the help of five good oars we dodged the swift currents, catching eddies, and after two hours trial the captains congratulated each other upon being masters of the situation. We soon began to race, each captain using his own judgement as to which channel to take, which gave each a chance to be ahead or behind according to his luck.

One boatman was most unlucky. Louis Capitaine, like so many of his peers, apparently could not swim.

> Louis had the bow oar in Peter January's boat and he rose when nearing shore. While standing in the bow he fell over, the headway of the boat made the distance a hundred feet before he was seen to rise. Lieut. Perry threw a life preserver and ordered the Arab swimmer, which this boat carried, to assist him. The swimmer jumped immediately and swam towards the spot but Louis disappeared before assistance reached him.

The voyage continued to Semneh, where "this cataract was thought the worst in the whole route."

> Colonel Alleyne showed me up to the gate and said "now everything is yours." It must be understood that his gate does by no means reach across the river. The river is about 1,000 feet wide here and the gate situated between the east shore and an island is about twenty feet wide. Not being sure of the water I tried a light boat first. I took boat No.1 through without any trouble, but would not trust the full load on any boat. We all lightened somewhat and passed the six boats through with tow lines in less than an hour. The freight we had left was portaged by camels.

On November 4 they reached Sarkamatto, and the next day they started back. The return journey took only a little more than a day, for they shot all the rapids without the slightest accident. Alleyne, "was so well pleased with our progress that he never interfered but left it all to us," recorded Jackson.

> Coming up we used all eddies, now we had to avoid them, coming up also if unable to proceed we could draw back and try another channel, now, everything depended upon quick judgement and prompt action, the more so as keel boats are not considered fit for rapid[s] work. I ordered my captains to follow at such distances as to give them time to avoid following should the leading boat err in the choice of channel.

At the foot of the Ambako rapids they met the advanced guard of the expedition. The movement southward was now fairly launched. Initially, the voyageurs went with the boats, one to each, as far as Sarkamatto at the upper end of the Second Cataract. Above there the number of voyageurs was reduced to one per five boats, as it was supposed that the soldier crews had by this time gained sufficient experience to be able to manage for themselves.

> Most of the Canadian voyageurs asked me how I found the Rapids. I told them that I had no trouble, considering it unadvisable to give a minute description, as I had already discovered how the fast falling water daily changed the appearance of the river, and what was a good place for me to go up would be bad now, whilst a bad place might be better. I was well aware that these voyageurs would have more trouble than I had. They had not only larger loads but soldier crews, whilst I had my Caughnawaga boys with whom I had worked from youth up and who promptly caught at a sign from me, while the soldiers had to be talked to, and, although having the best of will, could not always comprehend the situation.

Nevertheless, the whole force moved south with few casualties or losses.

Colonel William Butler, the Red River veteran in overall charge of river transportation, left Gemai on November 6 with a light boat and a picked crew to report on the progress of the troops already on the river and do his best to hasten them. The boat was chiefly manned by African Kroomen but it was steered by Butler's old friend from the Red River expedition, Chief William Prince. Another Saulteaux Indian, named Cochrane, was also in the crew, presumably as bowman.

Butler noticed that the rapids brought out in glaring contrast the difference between the real and so-called *voyageurs*, remarking that, while the craft that was in charge of "some French-Canadian Indian or Winnipeg half-breed, passed safely through in a maze of rock and whirl-pool, the one that carried some rough lumberman would be seen often wedged between rocks or around on some projecting point...."

Driving forward in an attempt to set a strong example, by November 27 Butler had reached the Third Cataract, and was leading the advance. He commented that, through all the island channels Prince had taken during the previous ten days' journey, "I do not remember having once had to retrace our steps, he had only to look at the water coming out at the end of some long channel to know whether it would prove practicable through its entire length."

As of November 28 not one boat, except for Butler's, had yet passed the Third Cataract, and the next day he received orders to return to the head of the Second Cataract. Running the Third Cataract, he reached Dal, where the boats belonging to the leading companies of the British battalions were arriving by December 4. Again he noted that:

> ...many boats had suffered damage from mishap in cataracts, chiefly caused by rough or unskillful handling. The real voyageurs were bringing in their boats with scarcely any damage; the imitation ones were easily to be discovered in the amount of repair their craft required....

The system under which a gang of boatmen would accompany a unit all the way up the river from Gemai to Sarkamatto, and then return down the river again and repeat the process, proved wasteful. Accordingly the 'fixed station' system was adopted. Instead of working up and down the length of the river from Gemai to Sarkamatto, the Canadians were established in fixed camps at the points where the wildest water existed. Here they remained permanently, taking the boats through as they came up, becoming fully familiar with their specific stretch of rapids while their knowledge kept pace with the changes produced by the falling water-level of the Nile.

A *voyageur* was put in the bow and stern of each boat and the soldier-passengers turned out, to walk up the river bank, so that only Canadians were in the boat if it was swamped or upset, and only they ran the risk of being drowned. Another of the Caughnawagas, John Morris, lost his life on November 16, about two kilometres north of the Ambigole cataract. It was almost inevitable that the Canadians should suffer some losses, since in really bad rapids they alone remained in the boats.

Thanks to this system, to the lightening of the boatloads, and the increasing experience of everyone concerned, the movement of the river column accelerated considerably as the weeks passed. Some of the early boat convoys had taken up to 49 days to reach Korti (the place now designated as the forward base) from Gemai or Sarras, but two that left Gemai on November 25 did the trip in 38 days.

Despite the advance of the river column, Christmas Day 1884 found one of the leading infantry regiments no further south than the rapids at Dal. The expedition was still progressing slowly, and Wolseley now gave up any hope of being in Khartoum by February 1, 1885. He decided to divide his army; the main contingent would follow the river where the Nile makes a great turn back on itself, while the mounted troops would cross the desert from Korti to Shendi. This plan was modified, however, when word came from Gordon advising an advance in strength and the prior securing of Berber. Taking that advice inevitably slowed the progress of the infantry, while the mounted column was held back to be used as a last resort.

This decision to give precedence to the river route directly affected the Canadians, whose skills would be badly needed at the formidable Fourth Cataract. They had been engaged for six months from September 9, 1884. Now they were asked to re-engage for a further six months but despite the offer of a large increase in wages most were unwilling to do so. Many had made it clear from the beginning that they wanted to resume their rafting work when spring returned to the Canadian woods, while others may have been discouraged by the prospect of the hot Sudanese summer.

In the end only six foremen and 83 boatmen re-engaged and there were comparatively few French Canadians or Indians among them - a serious matter since those groups included the best of the boatmen. William Prince had to return to Canada on account of ill-health and with him went the remaining Saulteaux voyageurs. There were only six Indians among those who re-engaged and Denison could only remark "I wish I had more."

Completion of the Task

From Wolseley's headquarters at Korti the desert cavalry column finally advanced in strength on January 8. Through Jakdul they continued to Abu Klea where they defeated the Mahdists on January 17 and reached the Nile. Again they defeated a Mahdist attack and contact was made with steamers sent out of Khartoum by Gordon. However, it was not until January 24 when the steamers carrying a small detachment of infantry reached Khartoum and found the city fallen to the Mahdists and Gordon dead. Wolseley's expedition had arrived 56 hours too late.

On 24 February, a general retreat was ordered. As the force moved down the river the remaining voyageurs, despite their depleted numbers, had their greatest triumph. Speed was essential and orders specifically stated that Canadian pilots run each boat through difficult rapids. With fewer than 70 voyageurs and over 200 boats, it was gruelling work. Having taken one boat down a rapid, the pair of Canadians would walk back and bring down another, repeating the process until they had made as many as seven trips in a day. By March 9 they had reached Korti. Three days later Denison and most of his men left for Cairo and Canada.

The success of the Canadian contingent was evident to senior officers. Lieutenant-Colonel Coleridge Grove, the commandant at Gemai and assistant adjutant-general for boat services, recorded that:

> The employment of the voyageurs was a most pronounced success. Without them it is to be doubted whether the boats would have got up at all, and it may, be taken as certain that if they had, they would have been far longer in doing so, and the loss of life would have been much greater than has been the case....

Brigadier-General F.W. Grenfell, in overall charge of Nile communications fully endorsed Grove's view. "I am of opinion that the Indians were best adapted to working the many rapids. Their skill in handling a boat in bad water was most marked. The expedition could hardly have done without their valuable aid." Finally, Butler concluded that the best of the voyageurs were:

> ...French-Canadians, Iroquois from Lachine, and Swampy Indians and half-breeds from Winnipeg. Could we have obtained a couple of hundred more of this class of real voyageurs, our gain in time would have been very great - so great indeed that the saving of an entire week might easily have been effected in the concentration of the fighting force at the rendezvous at Korti.

Those boatmen who actually reached Khartoum, were awarded the KIRBEKAN bar together with THE NILE (1884-85) medal. Sixteen Canadians, including one Saulteaux and two Caughnawagas, lost their lives. Six were drowned in the Nile cataracts, two were killed by falling from a train in Egypt, and eight died of natural causes. The compensation granted was generous by the standards of the day. The families of dead boatmen were paid the balance of pay the men would have received had they lived to serve out their engagements. In addition, where the dead man left a widow, or where he had been supporting a widowed mother, special grants were made.

The North-West Rebellion, 1885

Louis Riel

Following the failure of his provisional government in the Red River district in 1869-70, Louis Riel had escaped into exile in Montana. That suited the federal government very well. In Ontario he was considered the murderer of Orangeman Thomas Scott, sentenced to death and executed by his provisional government; in Quebec he was seen by some as a heroic defender of Roman Catholicism and the French culture in western Canada. The last thing that the Cabinet wanted to do was to have to arbitrate his fate. In 1873, however, he was elected *in absentia* to the federal House of Commons in a by-election for the constituency of Provencher. He went to Ottawa surreptitiously and signed the MP's register, but was immediately expelled from the House on a motion introduced by the Ontario Orange leader, Mackenzie Bowell, and returned to the United States.

He was re-elected in the general election of 1874 but did not attempt to take his seat this time, while the prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald went so far as to finance his exile in his endeavours to keep the inter-provincial peace. Time passed and emotions cooled, however, and he was granted amnesty to return to Canada in 1875, but his deteriorating mental condition necessitated hospitalization from 1876 through 1878.

He became an American citizen in 1883 and eventually settled in the Métis community of St. Peter's in Montana, where he began teaching, but in 1884 a loose coalition of Métis, Indians and disgruntled white settlers in the valley of the North Saskatchewan River encouraged him to return to Canada in order to represent them in pursuit of various claims and grievances against the Dominion government. Soon, Riel again declared a provisional government, this time at Batoche, in response to which Sir John A. Macdonald dispatched the North-West Field Force to restore order and re-assert Canadian sovereignty. The major battles and engagements of the Rebellion were fought at Duck Lake, Frog Lake, Fish Creek, Cut Knife Hill, and Frenchman's Butte, with the Métis being decisively defeated at Batoche.

Tension Builds

In 1884 there were more than 26,000 Indians in the Canadian North-West, and perhaps half that number of Métis. Had they risen as one, then the Dominion hold on that country would have become very tenuous indeed, but in the event relatively few of them rebelled. The coming of the federal government had been hard on Riel's people as Morton and Roy pointed out in the introduction to their *Telegrams of the North-West Campaign*.

> By the winter of 1879, the great herds of buffalo had finally been slaughtered. A way of life for both Métis and Indians had vanished, and the sole alternative was the dreary, uncertain business of farming. For the Métis ... along the banks of the Saskatchewan River, even that kind of life seemed uncertain. The Canadian government allotted reserves of land for the Indians while white settlers were guaranteed a share of those arbitrary blocks of land into which the government surveyors were beginning to carve the prairie landscape. For the Métis, clinging to the long, narrow river-front strips in the pattern of settlement their ancestors had brought from New France, there were no guarantees at all.

The Indian situation was, if anything, worse, and most of them were in no condition to rebel, however much they might have liked to do so.

> The end of the buffalo meant a choice between starvation and being cooped up on small reserves, condemned to a lifetime of miserable and ignominious agriculture. With domineering assurance, government officials guided their choice, providing just enough food to keep the native people from starvation but cutting the ration to force the Indians to farm. Most Indian bands bitterly accepted the inevitable; other found it unendurable. By 1885 there were those, particularly among the Crees and the Sioux, who were ready for any pretext to escape their fate. The majority preferred to wait, to see how the white man's power fared.

Their own power was slight. No more than three or four hundred Métis and a thousand generally half-hearted Indians rallied to Riel's banner, and their grinding poverty had prevented both groups from accumulating adequate weapons. While many of the Métis still had their old buffalo rifles (with which they were deadly shots) the Indians had mostly been reduced to old, worn-out shotguns good for little but making noise. On the other hand, well-armed Canadian militiamen were soon pouring west, over the still incomplete railroad, in their thousands. The federal government could also count upon a good many white frontiersmen, ranchers and cowboys, to serve as scouts. There was not the need for Indian support that there had been in the past.

Choosing Sides

Longstanding animosities existing between Plains Cree bands who did take up arms and other aboriginal groups who had had somewhat less unpleasant experiences in their encounters with government officials and other whites, rendered concerted action in common support of Riel unlikely. Nor were Riel's views about Indians likely to rally many of them to his cause. He thought them primitive savages who should be made to work, "as Pharaoh had made the Jews work" - presumably for the benefit of the Métis, just as the Jews had been made to work for the benefit of Egyptians." "The Crees are the most civilized Indians of the Canadian north-west because they have been ... in constant communications with the half-breeds," he had written while still in Montana. "The Blackfeet and the Bloods are nothing but savages." Thus while Big Bear's and Poundmakers's respective band of Plains Cree and some Dakota Sioux were active in the rebellion, most of the other bands, even the neighbouring groups of Woods Cree, stayed out of the fighting.

Hayter Reed, the Indian commissioner for the north-west and a man of notoriously harsh judgements, known to the Indians as "Iron Heart," found that, overall, only 28 bands out of the 74 in his jurisdiction were "disloyal," although he failed to define exactly what he meant by disloyalty. Other judges might have arrived at a significantly lesser total. Certainly the majority, including the Blackfoot bands, chose to respect the spirit of numerous treaty relationships previously ratified with the Crown, and thus remained neutral. "We will be loyal to the Crown whatever happens," Crowfoot, their leading chief, told John A Macdonald. "I have a copy of this [message] and when the trouble is over will have it with pride to show to the Queen's Officers and we leave our future in your hands." The Blackfoot Confederacy, described by Morton as "probably the most powerful and warlike group of Indians in the Canadian North-West, " consisted of three Algonquian-speaking groups, the Peigan, the Bloods, and the Blackfoot proper.

Most Métis communities also stayed clear of the fighting, with those who did support Riel being concentrated along the south branch of the Saskatchewan River, around Batoche. Meanwhile, units of mounted Métis riflemen and scouts from other areas, were recruited by the Dominion government to patrol the frontier with the United States, to guard the lines of communication and transport, and to act as security against cross-border arms smuggling and the possible movement of Métis or Indian reinforcements in support of Riel.

Jean Louis Legare, originally from Quebec, was the chief resident trader for the Hudson's Bay Company in the Wood Mountain area. He explained to Edgar Dewdney, the lieutenant-governor of the North-West Territories, that the Métis of Willow Branch and Wood Mountain were "in a starving condition [and] that they wished to remain there, so as not to be implicated in any way with the rebellion, and that they would be glad of any employment" that might give them some relief. Thus, as would be the case in the twentieth century, economic necessity was often one of the premier motives compelling Métis and other Aboriginal involvement in military or paramilitary undertakings on behalf of the Canadian government. "Legare has left Moose Jaw with all the half-breeds there, they will scout from Roche Percee to Cyprees under Legare," Dewdney told the minister of militia in Ottawa on 14 April 1885.

> Legare's Scouts were all residents of the Cypress Hills. The Wood Mountain Scouts allied themselves with the government although they were not officially sanctioned by the Defence Department. The Scouts, 45 in all, were actually commissioned as N[orth] W[est] M[ounted] P[olice] scouts, and as such were paid from Police appropriations. Legare's Scouts also operated around Moose Jaw and Willow Branch, and were employed to watch the United States boundary for any attempts by the Montana half-breed community to send arms, ammunition, or men north to assist Riel's forces. They also functioned as the eyes and ears of the Maple Creek, Wood Mountain and Regina police posts, keeping the government informed as to what was going on in the Cypress Hills' Métis and Indian communities.

The police found this arrangement perfectly satisfactory, since the Métis patrols "fulfilled the double purpose of finding work for idle hands to do, and having the country thoroughly watched."

There were also a number of Métis serving as individuals in primarily white units. Indeed, there was one of them in the three-man patrol that captured Riel after his defeat at Batoche, according to Harvey Dwight, the American-born general manager of the Great North-West Telegraph Company's cable to Ottawa.

> Riel was captured today at noon by three scouts named Armstrong, D.H. Diehl and Howrie four miles north of Batoche's [*sic*]. The scouts had been out in the morning to scour the country, but these three spread from the main body, and just as they were coming out of some brush on an unfrequented trail leading to Batoche's they spied Riel with three companions. He was unarmed but they carried shot guns.... No effort was made on his part to escape and after a brief conversation in which they expressed surprise at finding him there, Riel declared that he intended to give himself up. His only fear was that he would be shot by the troops.... He was assured of a fair trial, which was all he seemed to want.... To avoid the main body of the scouts Riel was taken to a coulee near by and hidden while Diehl went off to corral a horse for him.
>
> ...Riel appears careworn and haggard; he has let his hair and beard grow long; he is dressed in a poorer fashion than most of the half-breeds captured.

Of the three scouts who captured him, Robert Armstrong had scouted for the US Army before serving as a scout for the NWMP, William Diehl had been ranching near Fort Carlton before the rebellion and Thomas Hourie (not Howrie), was a Métis serving with French's Scouts attached to Middleton's column. Whether Riel's trial was fair is still a matter for dispute, but the verdict was Guilty and he was hanged for his pains. Gabriel Dumont, who had been Riel's adjutant and military commander, fled to the United States, returning a few years later following a general amnesty.

Aftermath of the Rebellion

In the aftermath of the Northwest Rebellion, the dream of an autonomous Métis homeland was crushed and the Métis were dispersed across an even wider area (especially northward into the Territories). Despite the fact that most Indian bands on the plains had remained neutral, restrictive Indian Act amendments were unilaterally and arbitrarily imposed as a punitive measure against all Indians, to dissuade any future rejection of governmental authority. One of the outcomes of this hardline approach was the ill-fated "peasant farming policy", introduced and promoted by deputy superintendent-general of Indian Affairs, Hayter Reed, from 1889 through 1897. Briefly, Reed's peasant farm policy dictated that Indians were to be encouraged toward economic self-sufficiency as subsistence-level farmers in the manner of East European peasants, producing their own wares and implements for their own domestic use and consumption. Band members involved were expected to manufacture at home the tools and equipment they were to use in their daily farming and husbandry activities, while being actively denied access to any modern machinery and labour-saving devices which might allow their agricultural output to compete with that of neighbouring white farmers. Ironically, these neighbouring white farmers were often former peasant farmers themselves, newly arrived from various regions of eastern Europe as part of a government policy to develop the prairies.

The South African War, 1899-1902

The second South African War, more commonly known as the Boer War, was very much an Imperial affair, with little significance for Canada as a nation. Pressure from the Anglo-Canadian community, however, drove the government to raise voluntary contingents for service in South Africa.

In the aftermath of the disappearance of the buffalo and the suppression of the North-West Rebellion, the prairie Indians had been left in hopeless poverty as a result of attempts to convert them from their traditional culture to subsistence farming and an unwillingness to put much money into doing so. Nor was any effort made to assimilate them into the mainstream of Canadian life, and they languished on the fringes, both economically and socially. To be fair, perhaps, it should be remembered that until 1917 there was no personal income tax in the still- inchoate Dominion of Canada, and no corporate taxes until 1920. The federal authorities (who were responsible for aboriginal welfare) relied almost entirely upon customs and excise duties for revenues and there were many competing demands upon their limited resources as they endeavoured to build a nation out of half a dozen disparate (and often rival) communities - the Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario, the prairie provinces and Alberta, and British Columbia.

The eastern tribes, especially those of Quebec and Ontario, were more firmly established in society - although still far from the Canadian mainstream - and economically on a sounder footing, since they had always depended to some extent upon an agricultural base. They still had the desire and the capability to raise aboriginal contingents, and as early as 1892 an Ohsweken (Six Nations) company of the 37th "Haldimand Battalion of Rifles" was mustered. However, efforts to have the company transferred *en masse* to one of the Canadian contingents recruited to fight in South Africa were unsuccessful. Perhaps, Indian agent "Reports of rumours circulating in the North West that Indians wish to join the Boer force in Transvaal" caused the government concern that the provision of modern military training and organization to Native Canadians, would somehow be utilized against the state itself. Nearly all the more than 8,000 Canadians who went to fight in South Africa were militiamen or volunteers from the community at large - Canada's minuscule regular component, the Permanent Force, was only a few hundred strong - and, no doubt, a number of aboriginals were in their ranks, seeking warrior status, but they joined as individuals. One of them was Private Walter White of the Anderdon band of Wyandot (Hurons), near Sarnia, who enlisted in the First Contingent with the 2nd (Special Service) Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry, after previous service as a colour sergeant with the 21st Battalion "Essex Fusiliers". Like many another South African volunteer, he dropped his rank to enlist, but in at least one respect his circumstances were unique.

The first consolidated Indian Act, passed in 1876, had allowed for the voluntary mass enfranchisement of entire bands as 'regular' citizens of Canada, thus removing themselves from the provisions of the Act. Intermarriage into surrounding non-Native communities, increasingly paternalistic government intrusions into their everyday affairs, and on-going erosion of their land base, had given rise to the view among the Anderdon band of Wyandot that they would be wise to choose that option, placing their affairs beyond federal control and assuming simple ownership of the individual tracts constituting their reserve. They had begun petitioning the federal authorities for mass enfranchisement in 1876, and in 1881 this was granted. The former Wyandot Reserve at

Anderdon thus became Anderdon Township, Essex County, Ontario, and although Walter White was Indian by heritage and patrimony, he was not subject to the provisions of the Indian Act.

White was killed in action "within twenty yards of the Boer trenches and much in advance of any other British dead, at the Battle of Paardeberg, South Africa, February 18, 1900. He was 19 years of age ...."

Because enlistment was on an individual basis and no account was taken of racial origin in enlistment papers, we have little knowledge of Indians who served in South Africa, but it seems likely that they provided a proportionate share of recruits. At least those who enlisted in Canada were spared the humiliation imposed upon John Brant-Sero, a Grand River Mohawk, who tried to enroll in a British unit.

> I have just returned from South Africa, disappointed in many respects, but I do not wish these lines to be understood as a grievance. I went to that country from Canada hoping that I might enlist in one of the mounted rifles; however, not being a man of European descent, I was refused to do active service in Her Majesty's cause as did my forefathers in Canada ... I was too genuine a Canadian.

In Canada's next war, although there would initially be some similar feelings in parts of the Dominion, the virulent nature of the fighting and the horrendous casualties would soon change that perception. Any man willing to enlist, no matter what his racial origin, would soon be welcome in the army and, eventually in the United Kingdom's Royal Air Force, too.

CHAPTER 6

THE WORLD WARS

The First World War

Soon after the outbreak of war, in August 1914, a war destined to become the greatest in history up until that time, the question was raised as to the desirability of enlisting Aboriginals. In the minds of many Europeans, conditioned by reading authors such as James Fenimore Cooper at best and names easily (and best) forgotten at worst, "Red Indians" were associated with torture and scalping – practices quite unacceptable under the rules of war as laid out in the Geneva Convention ratified by all the major European powers in1906. Consequently, it was decided in Ottawa not to accept Native volunteers on the grounds that "while British troops [Canadians were still 'British' in 1914] would be proud to be associated with their fellow subjects, yet Germans might refuse to extend to them the privileges of civilized warfare." However, by the time that Ottawa had worked out that formula, many had already enlisted, and many militia units responsible for recruiting were either unaware of the prohibition or decided to ignore it.

The first major attempt to recruit Indians was the work of William Hamilton Merritt, the son of that William Hamilton Merritt who had been instrumental in building the Welland Canal. Merritt junior was an honorary chief of the Six Nations, and in late 1914 he was advocating the formation of a Six Nations battalion at Brantford. Despite the enthusiasm of many band members it soon became clear that his plan was too ambitious, and he modified it to an offer of $5000 to equip two companies as part of an all-Indian battalion to be commanded by white officers. In Ottawa, the Militia Council concluded that his offer was "inconvenient," however, and subsequently a Council of the Chiefs also decided not to act on the proposal.

Most Aboriginals enlisted for the same reasons that other Canadians did – patriotism, adventure or simply to earn a regular wage – but there was still a warrior ethos extant in certain bands, particularly those from the more remote regions of the country. There might have been more recruits of that type if it had not been for the fact that many such men did not speak either English or French. Generally speaking, the higher the proportion of English or French speakers, the higher the enlistment rate.

The annual report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1919 recorded total status Indian enlistments during the war at "more than four thousand," noting that this figure represented approximately 35% of Indian males of military age, and that there were undoubtedly many other cases of Indian enlistments not reported to the Department. Initially, in 1914 the [Indian] Department had reluctantly allowed Indians to enlist; in 1915 it sanctioned individual efforts to try and recruit them; and by 1917 it had become directly involved in promoting their recruitment. If before the war it worked to eradicate the warrior ethos ... it now tried in the second, third and fourth years of the "Great War" to promote it.

However, Indian enthusiasm was carefully directed by their elders towards Imperial sentiments and the monarch, rather than to Canada, *per se*. According to one Indian agent, "the leading men of a number of west coast tribes have expressed their desire to be allowed to serve the empire at this crisis, and offer to send numbers of their younger men if called upon." In Ontario, Chief F.M. Jacobs of Sarnia, wrote to the Deputy Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, Duncan Campbell Scott, that his people were willing to provide "help toward the Mother Country in its present struggle in Europe. The Indian Race as a rule are loyal to England; this loyalty was created by the noblest Queen that ever lived, Queen Victoria." An unrecorded number of Non-Status Indians, Métis and Inuit also served – probably at least as many as Status Indians.

Roughly half of the eligible Micmaq and Maliseet men of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia signed up. A number of reserve communities in Manitoba had exceptionally high enlistment records, in proportion to their total band memberships at large. Twenty men of the Peguis Band saw frontline service, out of a total adult male population of 118; while The Pas Band saw nineteen of their number go to War, out of a total adult male population of 92. Similarly, the Sioux Band at Griswold, Manitoba, saw twenty men leave out of a total population of 84, while 33 men of the St. Peter's Band served, out of a total adult male population of 127.

Only three men of the Algonquin of Golden Lake (Ontario) Band who were fit and of the right age failed to enlist. In British Columbia, the Head of the Lake Band saw every single man between the ages of 20 and 35 volunteer. Approximately one hundred Ojibwas from isolated areas in northern Ontario travelled to Port Arthur to join up, and perhaps for the first time Inuit rallied to the colours – at least fifteen men from Labrador having all or some Inuit ancestry enlisted.

The Six Nations of the Grand River Reserve provided more soldiers than any other Indian band – approximately three hundred of them. Together with fifty Mohawks from Kahnawake and a similar number from Akwesasne, it provided a major component of the 114th Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF), nicknamed "Brock's Rangers". Two of its companies, officers included, were composed entirely of Aboriginals, many of those from the Grand River bands having served in the 37th Regiment "Haldimand Rifles" before the war. The 114th Battalion, like many other of the higher-numbered battalions, was broken up after arriving in England and its members used as replacements for casualties in the lower-numbered battalions of the Canadian Corps.

Attached to the 114th Battalion was a thirty-piece band of whom most were Indians from the Six Nations Reserve at Ohsweken. The band followed the battalion ... overseas to England where it toured for ceremonial purposes. A feature of their concerts was Indian war dances performed by some of the bandsmen. In 1917 the band was broken up and many of its members assigned to combat units.

Notable Individuals

There were probably more aboriginals in the 107th Battalion, raised in Winnipeg, than in any other unit of the CEF – more than five hundred by one count, but not enough to make it an all-Indian unit, although whether this was by accident or design is not clear. Most, if not all, of its officers were white men. The 107th Battalion did not share the fate of the 114th, but it never had the opportunity to fight as an infantry unit and show the world just what Indian warriors were capable of. Arriving in England in September 1916, in February 1917 it was converted into a pioneer battalion, and at the end of that month it moved to France. Pioneers, perhaps, but its casualties were heavy. In August, during the fight for Hill 70, just north of Lens (this, not the attack on Vimy Ridge, was Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Currie's first major operation in command of the Canadian Corps) Pte. Andrew Anderson, a Cree from Punnichy, Saskatchewan, won a Military Medal.

> On August 15, 1917, Private Anderson accompanied Major Warren across 'No Man's Land' [between the lines] under exceptionally heavy fire. He assisted in taping out the communication trenches to be constructed and although shells were bursting all around, bravely carried on with his task. His utter disregard of danger was a magnificent example of coolness and determination. Later, during the work, he carried wounded out of shell fire, and throughout the engagement was of invaluable assistance to the working party and to the wounded.

Aboriginal support for military involvement during the First World War, extensive as it ultimately was, was by no means universal, however. The cultural, political, legal and economic pressures to participate or not participate were extreme, and before the war ended they had served to divide communities and families. Some band councils refused to support the war effort unless the Monarch (*i.e.*, Great Britain) acknowledged their status as independent nations – an acknowledgment consistently rejected as an unwarrantable interference in Canadian autonomy!

An Aboriginal background and civilian livelihood (acting perhaps in combination with longstanding stereotypes attributing extraordinary stealth and cunning to Native people) sometimes had the effect of placing such individuals in the most hazardous jobs the army had to offer. Henry Louis ('Ducky') Norwest, a stocky, powerfully-built, Cree-Métis from Alberta, had in peacetime been a saddler, cowboy, hunter and trapper. He was described by a fellow soldier as "reserved rather than effusive," a shy man who got his nickname from 'ducking' [*i.e.,* avoiding] the girls while on leave in London. He served as a sniper with the 50th Battalion. Officially credited with 115 kills, the highest score recorded for a sniper in the armies of the British Empire, he was awarded the Military Medal and Bar. His career in the army did not begin so gloriously, however. He initially enlisted in January 1915, under the name Henry Louis, and was discharged after three months for "misbehaviour." His behaviour may have had something to do with respect for rank. As Fred Gaffen has pointed out (in his *Forgotten Soldiers*) "For Indians who had been raised in the traditional way there were some unique problems of adjusting to army life ..."

> Traditionally, among Indians, there was not the same sharp distinction between a war chief and warriors as between commissioned officers and other ranks. A war chief was considered by warriors more of an equal. If a particular warrior did not like or agree with one war chief he was usually not constrained from moving to another or from leaving the war party. While it would be customary practice for a chief to offer a warrior entering his tepee food or refreshments, and to treat him as an equal, such familiarity did not normally exist between commissioned officers and other ranks of the Canadian Corps.

Eight months later, Henry signed up again, under the Norwest name, and this time his military career was more successful. Norwest (or Louis) was killed in August 1918, near Amiens.

Francis Pegahmagabow, an Ojibwa from the Parry Island agency in Ontario, was another who was renowned for his skills as a sniper. The most decorated Native soldier of the war for bravery, he was awarded the Military Medal and two Bars for his services, one of only 39 members of the CEF to achieve that distinction. Among the many other Indians who distinguished themselves, a few may be taken as representative of the many.

Albert Mountain Horse, a band member from the Blood Reserve, was the first recruit from Alberta. A former student at St. Paul's Anglican Boarding School, Mountain Horse, who had been active in the school's cadet corps, was commissioned as a lieutenant in the militia after leaving school. He was serving as a cadet instructor with the 23rd Alberta Rangers when war was declared. While subsequently serving overseas with the 10th Battalion, CEF, he contracted tuberculosis but was reluctant to be invalided out or even hospitalized. ".... the doctor said he was going to send me to the hospital. I told him I would sooner die like a man in the trenches than have a grave dug for me."

He was a victim of the first gas attacks.

> I was in the thick of the fighting at Ypres and we had to get out of it. The Germans were using the poisonous gas on our men – oh, it was awful – it is worse than anything I know of. I don't mind rifle fire and the shells bursting around us, but this gas is the limit. I have a German helmet I want to give you .... I took it from a Prussian Guard. I gave him the steel through the mouth and then took his helmet.

But that was his last day in action and he would, unfortunately, have "a grave dug for me." Mountain Horse died in Quebec City on November 19, 1915, one day after having returned from overseas, his tuberculosis exacerbated by the effects of gas. This health factor worked against Indians, particularly those from the more remote parts of the country where they had had little contact with white men and the white man's diseases. They were unusually susceptible to sicknesses such as tuberculosis and pneumonia, and many of those who enlisted were soon struck down by nature.

Alexander DeCouteau (or DeCoteau) was another Indian from the West who paid the supreme sacrifice. A noted athlete, DeCouteau, a Cree originally from the Red Pheasant Reserve, was a police sergeant on the Edmonton force before enlisting. He had been a member of Canada's 1912 Olympic team in Stockholm, where he ran in the 5,000 metre event. Enlisting in 1916, he served successively with the 202nd and 49th Battalions before being killed at Passchendaele on October 30, 1917. Dan Pearson of British Columbia's Metlakatla Band was awarded the Military Medal, while Edwin Victor Cook of Alert Bay received the Distinguished Conduct Medal. Unfortunately, neither of these latter two survived the war, Pearson dying of pneumonia while Cook was killed in action.

Another from the western provinces decorated for valour was Saskatchewan's Lieutenant Alexander Brass, a 36-year-old Cree from the File Hills Colony, who won a Military Medal before being commissioned in the field. A prosperous farmer in prewar days, Brass had also led a brass band composed of ex-pupils of the local Indian schools which frequently played at recruiting meetings. In January 1916, after they had performed in one apathetic community where only one or two in the audience signed up, "the members of the band held a short meeting among themselves, and then announced that they had all decided to enlist."

Native soldiers from Quebec and the Maritime provinces were likewise among those decorated for gallantry in recognition of their wartime services. Quebec band members Sergeant Clear Sky from Kahnawake, and Privates William Cleary, Joseph Roussin and Delphis Theberge, were each awarded Military Medals; while Privates Joseph Morris from Nova Scotia, and James Francis from Prince Edward Island, also received that award. Morris, who was wounded three times, was also later awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal, the second highest award for valour for non-commissioned ranks, second only to the Victoria Cross.

Aboriginals also found themselves in more distant theatres of war. From British Columbia, David Bernardan, a band member from the Oweekayno Reserve in the Bella Coola agency, commanded a motor transport vessel on the Euphrates River in the Mesopotamia theatre. Coming from the Bella Coola area, it was to be expected that he would be familiar with boats, but how did he end up in Mesopotamia?

The Ontario and Quebec Iroquois reserves of Grand River and Kahnawake were notable in that they were home to the only three Canadian Indians who would hold commissions as flying officers in the British flying services during the First World War. Although direct enrolments to pilot training within the Royal Flying Corps were periodically available, the more common route to pilot wings for aspiring aviators was a secondment from another branch of service, and a period of duty as an air observer, before being accepted for pilot training. This latter scenario was the route followed by James David Moses and Oliver Milton Martin of Grand River, and John Randolph Stacey of Kahnawake. The three had previously served as infantry officers with the 114th and 107th Battalions, two formations largely manned and officered by Indians and Métis from Quebec, Ontario, and the prairie provinces. Moses and Stacey would not survive the war, while Martin would rise to the rank of brigadier during the Second World War.

Two days before his death, his aircraft shot down by anti-aircraft fire, Moses, an observer at the time, wrote home:

> Dear Dad ... Just a few lines to let you know that I am getting along O.K. ... My pilot and I have had some very thrilling experiences just lately. We bombed the German troops from a very low height and had the pleasure of shooting hundreds of rounds into dense masses of them with my machine gun. They simply scattered and tumbled in all directions. Needless to say we got it pretty hot and when we got back to the aerodrome found that our machine was pretty well shot up.

Stacey, the pilot, was killed in a flying accident in the spring of 1918.

Interwar Politics

In the postwar era, returned veterans of the Grand River Reserve organized politically to help depose the traditional Six Nations system of hereditary chiefs, which they claimed had not been supportive of them and their families during the war. Their goal, which they achieved in 1924, was the implementation of governance by elected band councils, as authorized by Indian Act provisions of that era. Thousands of miles away geographically, and light-years away politically, the radically left-wing Communist party had come to power in Russia, and in North America a tiny minority of activists were beavering away in the hope of converting Canada and the United States to a socialist, if not communist, philosophy. Many of those in Canada were ex-servicemen, and the traditional political parties feared that they might sway their fellow veterans to an extent that would threaten the stability of the country.

Aboriginals saw things differently. "Now that peace has been declared, the Indians of Canada may look with just pride upon the part played by them in the Great War, both at home and on the field of battle ... Not in vain did our young men die in a strange land; not in vain are our Indian bones mingled with the soil of a foreign land for the first time since the world began," said Edward Ahenakew, Saskatchewan Cree clergyman, *circa* 1923. His people saw "radical and progressive changes" absolutely essential to bettering the Indian way of life.

Nevertheless, in 1927 the federal government unilaterally imposed Indian Act amendments which attempted to limit Native political activity. Although never fully successful, these restrictive clauses remained in force until 1951. Thus, on the eve of the Second World War, Status Indians in Canada had a severely limited range of civil, political and legal rights. Perhaps that is why, while Status Indian enlistments during the First World War were estimated in excess of four thousand, during the Second World War enlistments would actually be fewer, with slightly more than three thousand recorded.

The Second World War

Indian enlistments during the Second World War, by province, were as follows (total Native population according to 1944 census in brackets): Nova Scotia, 117 (2,364); New Brunswick, 203 (2,047); Prince Edward Island, 27 (266); Quebec, 316 (15,182); Ontario, 1,324 (32,421); Manitoba, 175 (15,892); Saskatchewan, 443 (14,158); Alberta, 144 (12,754); British Columbia, 334 (25,515); Yukon, 7 (1,531); Northwest Territories, 0 (3,816). Total, 3,090 (125,946). More than 170 were killed in action, died of wounds, or died of natural causes while in uniform.

Status Indians had been exempted from conscription when it was introduced during the First World War. However, the government took a different view after the National Resources Mobilization Act (NRMA), establishing the principle of conscription of single men for the defence of the homeland, was passed in June 1940. The 1917 Military Service Act had authorized the government to dispatch conscripts overseas; the 1940 version only required men to serve in Canada. The Department of Justice ruled that Indians could not be excused from the provisions of the act (although the Inuit were) and there were immediate objections from a number of Aboriginal communities.

While many Aboriginal individuals, men and women, volunteered to join the armed forces, there was much opposition to compulsory service. The Quebec-based Aboriginal rights organization *"le comité de Protection"* maintained that status Indians were exempt from conscripted service under the 1940 NRMA, citing their inferior citizenship status under the Indian Act legislation, and the doctrine of the sovereignty of Indian nations in North America as implied in the Royal Proclamation of 1763. Indian reserve communities in northern Ontario argued exemptions under the terms of the Robinson-Huron and Robinson-Superior treaties of 1850. The Lorette Band, from a reserve near Quebec City, argued that all Natives were exempt from military service under the terms of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, a claim that was promptly denied by the Department of Indian Affairs. The Caughnawagas complained that "if the abuse is not stopped, we may in a little while be deprived of all the little privileges you pale face [*sic*] left us." The Six Nations Band at Brantford, Ontario "strongly protested the imposition of 30 days military training upon the young single men of this reservation." Initially, groups of men were only conscripted for thirty days of training, although that was soon extended to four months and, eventually, in 1941 conscription was for the duration of the war. Several tribal councils in north-western Ontario also passed resolutions denouncing conscription, and demanded that their Indian Agent "stretch out a long arm and halt all the functions of government." Some objectors were hauled into court when they failed to comply with the registration requirements, but judges were reluctant to act and postponed their cases pending clarification by Ottawa.

When that clarification came, from the deputy minister of Justice, it was quite explicit. "Indians, being British subjects, are subject to Section 3 of the National War Service Regulations, 1940 (Recruits)," and that remained the official position of the government for the duration of the war.

Many Aboriginals whose status was regulated by treaty argued that, since they did not enjoy the rights of full citizenship but were, rather, wards of the government, as such they were not subject to compulsory service; but the government rejected that claim, too.

In the case of smaller, more remote communities, enforcing the issue was often extremely difficult due to their geographic isolation.

> The case of Edward Cardinal of Whitecourt, Alberta, typified the many problems Registrars faced. When a notice ordering Cardinal's medical examination prior to military training was returned by the post office, J.P. McIsaac, the Edmonton Registrar, asked the Whitecourt postmaster why the notice had not been picked up. The postmaster replied that Cardinal frequented an area 12 miles north of Whitecourt, around McLeod Lake, and that he stopped by to pick up his mail only twice during the year.

There were others trapping, hunting and fishing in the more remote parts of the country whose contacts with "civilization" were even more tenuous than those of Edward Cardinal. McIsaac subsequently reported that it was "practically impossible" to locate many of them, and added "the larger majority" were "quite irresponsible" and not worth pursuing. In British Columbia the Natives had "a habit of treating our notices and letters with apparent indifference," according to the Vancouver registrar.

Whatever the federal government's intentions were, by the early spring of 1942 there was a total lack of consistency in the application of the regulations as far as Aboriginals were concerned. In February the Mobilization Board in Edmonton had already stopped pursuing Indian delinquents; in British Columbia, individual cases were left to local Indian Agents to handle as they thought fit; in Manitoba, the military authorities declined to enlist most Indians due to language and medical difficulties, while, at the same time, refusing to issue the rejection certificates needed to be hired by local employers – hardly a serious problem to those who lived by trapping or fishing! Moving further east, (especially in southern Ontario and the area around Montreal) Indians were more integrated into mainstream Canadian life and serious efforts to apply the NRMA continued, with only limited success.

In April 1942 a national plebiscite released the government from its pledge to not post conscripts overseas and a clause in the NRMA was amended permitting the employment of conscripts overseas by Order-in-Council – *i.e.*, at the government's pleasure. However, that pleasure was not exercised until November 1944, when casualty rates in the north-west Europe fighting (and considerable ineptness in deploying manpower on the part of the military authorities) compelled Prime Minister Mackenzie King to authorize sending men overseas. However, although all Indians were liable for military service, it was decided by Cabinet that those bands that had signed Treaties 3, 6, 8 and 11, and by the terms of those treaties were not entitled to full Canadian citizenship, were exempt from overseas service. By that time, however, it was found that at least 324 individuals from those communities had already volunteered for service.

Gradually, attempts to conscript Indians were dropped, until, in February 1945, Indian Affairs circular memorandum No. 1098 directed registrars not to call Indians who spoke neither English nor French, not to issue orders to any Native living in remote areas; and to record any Indian recruit deemed unacceptable to the army, regardless of his physical condition, as "Not Acceptable for Medical Reasons." Opposition on the part of band councils continued unabated. Indeed, in some cases it was becoming more extreme than ever. In March 1945 Caughnawaga Chief Dominic Two-Axe threatened (in a letter to the Governor-General) to "kill every Mountie that comes on the reservation" in pursuit of draft dodgers. Such a threat made by a white Canadian would most certainly have resulted in arrest and prosecution, but after considerable discussion the authorities declined to take any action against Two-Axe.

Over the next four months all attempts to conscript the Native population were abandoned, whatever the letter of the law might say, but not until a week before the end of the war in Europe did the government formally relinquish attempts to apply it. On 2 May 1945 National Selective Service officials were ordered to drop further prosecution of Indian delinquents and the Justice Department authorized the granting of suspended sentences in all cases currently before the courts.

The Volunteers

Turning to those 3,000 Natives who had already volunteered, as in the First World War, most served in the infantry, perhaps primarily because a lower educational standard was required there, compared with other branches of the service, but also perhaps because its demands were best suited to many of them. The skills that served them in peacetime were readily adaptable to infantry training. The Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) generally required higher educational standards than the Canadian Army and, in addition, showed a reluctance to accept recruits not of Caucasian origin. Indeed, the RCAF barred entirely anyone not of "pure European descent" from holding a commission, although that regulation was soon repealed, while the RCN only wanted "British-born subjects of the white race" among its non-commissioned members, and that rule was not formally rescinded until February 1943. However, such regulations were holdovers from another age and a few Canadian Indians and Métis were accepted in both services from the outbreak of war. The 1942-1943 report of the Indian Affairs branch listed 29 Aboriginals in the RCAF and nine in the RCN, although those numbers certainly grew substantially before the war's end. Among the former was Flying Officer Willard John Bolduc, an Ojibwa from Chapleau, Ontario, who earned a Distinguished Flying Cross as an air gunner. Three Shead brothers from Manitoba's Fisher River Band, who had all worked on fishing vessels on Lake Winnipeg before the war, served in the RCN.

Perhaps not surprisingly, a considerable proportion of Aboriginal volunteers were second or third generation of their kind. Outstanding examples were the McLeod family of the Cape Croker agency, at Wiarton, Ontario, and the Dreavers from the Mistawasis Cree Band. John McLeod, an Ojibwa, served in the First World War and with the Veteran's Guard of Canada in the Second. Six of his sons and one of his daughters enlisted between 1940 and 1944, two sons paying the supreme sacrifice and two others being wounded in action. Joe Dreaver had earned a Military Medal in the First World War and had one brother killed in action and another died of wounds. He was a member of the Veteran's Guard in the Second World War and three of his sons and two daughters also served, together with his younger brother.

Thomas George Prince, certainly Canada's best-known Indian warrior of modern times, had been an army cadet during his brief years of schooling at the Elkhorn Residential School – he reached Grade Eight, but "couldn't go any further because we had no money." Those were the Depression years and he eked out a living lumbering and trapping, picking berries and doing any odd jobs he could find. On 3 June 1940 he enlisted in the army and, perhaps because he had some English and more education than many of his comrades, he was trained as a sapper. He went overseas with the 1st Division in December 1940 and was promoted to the still-lowly rank of lance corporal in February 1941. When the army decided to train paratroopers, he volunteered and was accepted. After completing a parachuting course in England he was posted back to Canada in September 1942 and assigned to the newly-forming 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion. By March 1943 he was a sergeant.

The battalion formed one-third of the unique American-Canadian First Special Service Force, composed of some sixteen hundred men trained not only as paratroopers but also as ski troops, demolition experts and specialists in close-quarter combat, an environment in which Sergeant Prince flourished. "Superb in fieldcraft, he was swift, silent and superior to his associates. Unseen movements came naturally to him." There being at that time little prospect of action in a parachute role or as ski troops, in the fall of 1943 the Force was sent to Italy, where it soon found itself manning almost a third of the Anzio perimeter as the Allies struggled to hold that bridgehead until the main force moving up the Italian peninsula could relieve it. There Prince first distinguished himself and won a Military Medal for gallantry.

> ... on 8 February 1944, Sergeant Prince, acting alone, ran a telephone wire from our lines fifteen hundred yards into enemy territory to a house in which he established and maintained an artillery observation post for twenty-four consecutive hours. From his position, Sergeant Prince was not only able to observe enemy artillery emplacements invisible from our lines, but was also directly responsible for the complete destruction by artillery of four such enemy positions which were causing considerable damage to our own troops and material.
>
> At one part of his twenty-four hour watch, Sergeant Prince's communications were cut by shells. Using his own ingenuity, Sergeant Prince donned available civilian clothes [*i.e.*, dressed as a farmer] and, under direct enemy observation went out to his line to re-establish contact for target observation.

> Sergeant Prince's courage and utter disregard for personal safety were an inspiration to his fellows and a marked credit to his unit.

In August the Special Service Force participated in the landings in southern France and Prince again distinguished himself, winning a US Silver Star.

> In charge of a two-man reconnaissance patrol, Sergeant Prince led it deep into enemy held territory, covering rugged, rocky mountains to gain valuable and definite information of the enemy's outpost positions, gun locations and a bivouac area. So accurate was the report rendered by the patrol that Sergeant Prince's regiment moved forward on 5 September 1944 and successfully wiped out the enemy bivouac area. The keen sense of responsibility and devotion to duty displayed by Sergeant Prince is in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the Allied Nations.

"By the time the battle was over, he had covered 70 km on foot, fought two battles and been without food or sleep for 72 hours. More than a thousand German soldiers were captured and an unknown number killed in the engagement."

At the end of the war Prince returned to civilian life and became a spokesman for the Manitoba Indian Association, seeking improved educational facilities for his people, improved roads on reserves, financial assistance to start farms and small businesses – his own small business, a janitorial service, soon failed, apparently through no fault of his – and protection of their hunting, fishing and trapping rights. But all his efforts resulted in only very minor amendments to the Indian Act. He returned to life as a lumberjack in the winter and worked as a labourer in a cement plant during the summers. But five years after his release from the Canadian Army he would find himself back in uniform, bound for Korea, where the additional three campaign medals that he would acquire would make him one of Canada's most-decorated Native soldiers.

While Prince was distinguishing himself in Italy and southern France, other Indians were doing likewise in north-west Europe. To take a couple of examples at random, Corporal Welby Lloyd Patterson, a Six Nations Indian from Ohsweken, earned a Military Medal on the night of 9-10 September 1944 while serving with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada, who were:

> ... among other sub-units of the 10th Infantry Brigade which had successfully set a small bridgehead over the canal at Moerbrugge, Belgium. The enemy counter-attacked in great strength and acting on his own initiative, Corporal Patterson worked his way through intense enemy mortar and machine-gun fire to a position behind two stumps from where, for three hours, he fired with such coolness and devastating accuracy that the enemy was unable to effectively counter-attack the main position. The courage, initiative and complete disregard for personal safety shown by Corporal Patterson was undoubtedly responsible for the defeat of repeated enemy thrusts at his unit's position.

Meanwhile a bridge was being built over the canal, and Gunner Richard Patrick of the 5th Anti-Tank Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery, and a member of British Columbia's Okanagan

Band, was part of the crew of a 17-pounder M-10 gun crew that, together with two tanks, crossed the bridge early the following morning.

> After the M-10 had shot several suspected enemy positions the actual location of the enemy positions became hard to estimate accurately due to poor visibility and fog. Gunner Patrick asked permission to go ahead on foot and carry out a reconnaissance to locate enemy positions. Despite the enemy fire he succeeded in getting into the middle of an enemy machine-gun position and there opened fire with his light machine-gun. His daring attack completely surprised the enemy, who totalled three officers and 52 other ranks, into surrender and cleared out a strong point which had pinned the infantry down for approximately two days.

Both Patterson and Patrick were lucky enough to win their medals unscathed. But that was not always the case. Rifleman Charles Nahwegezhic of the Sheguiandah Band from Manitoulin Island, was not so lucky.

> On 26 February 1945, 7 Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, attacked a strongly held enemy position over flat open ground.... The platoon suffered heavy casualties including the Platoon Commander and Platoon Sergeant. Rifleman Nahwegezhic was seriously wounded in the head but kept on advancing. Finally the platoon had to withdraw. Rifleman Nahwegezhic refused to go back and stayed behind with his Bren [light machine-]gun to cover the withdrawal.

His accurate and determined fire enabled the platoon to pull back and reorganize for a further successful attack. Nahwegezhic, whose younger brother, Roland, had already been killed in action in Italy, died of his wounds two days later, a circumstance that enabled him to be awarded the Military Medal. Had he died in the course of the fighting in which he won his medal, he would have been ineligible for it, since the idiosyncrasies of the Commonwealth Honours system at that time ensured that only the Victoria Cross and a Mention in Despatches – the highest and the lowest of gallantry awards – could be awarded posthumously.

A brief mention of Oliver Milton Martin has already been made earlier in this chapter, but his military career was so distinguished that it seems necessary to mention him again. A Mohawk from the Six Nations Grand River Reserve, Martin made his mark in both the army and the air force, and reached probably the highest rank ever attained by a Status Indian, ending his service with the rank of brigadier. Born in 1893, his military career began in 1909 when he joined the 37th Regiment "Haldimand Rifles" as a bugler. In 1915 he volunteered for the CEF, together with two brothers. As a lieutenant he spent seven months in France and Belgium, before becoming an observer with the Royal Flying Corps in 1917, and the following year he earned his pilot's wings. Between the wars he taught school and, as a lieutenant-colonel, he commanded The Haldimand Rifles from 1930 until the outbreak of the Second World War. In 1939 he was promoted to the rank of colonel, and the following year to brigadier, subsequently commanding the 14th and 16th Infantry Brigades on the west coast of Canada. In October 1944, at the age of 53, Brigadier Martin retired from active service.

Again, as had been the case during the First World War, separate figures were not kept for Non-Status Indian, Métis or Inuit enlistments. For Métis, as the November 2001, "*Final Report presented by the National Metis Veterans Association*" states:

> ... specific recruitment tactics [were] directed at the Metis ... [however] ... Metis individuals were told ... they were not allowed to register as 'Metis'. They had to assume the European nationality of their ancestors and became hyphenated Canadians ... so, one Metis soldier might be placed in a French-Canadian regiment such as the Vingt-deuxs [Royal 22^{e} Régiment] and another ended up in a Scottish regiment in kilts.

Because they were not formally categorized as Métis, separating them out from "the European nationality of their ancestors" on the one hand, and Native Canadians on the other, becomes difficult, but there were clearly a great many who served, and some so distinguished themselves that they can be readily identified. One was Charles Henry Byce, whose mother was a Cree from Moose Factory, Ontario, and his father was Henry Byce, a white man from Westmeath, Ontario, who had won both the Distinguished Conduct Medal – the so-called "poor man's Victoria Cross" – and France's *Médaille militaire* during the First World War.

His son joined The Lake Superior Regiment and earned his first decoration for valour, a Military Medal, in January 1945, when he was the corporal in charge of a five-man group assigned to provide covering fire for a reconnaissance across the Maas river. When the patrol came under attack from three different enemy positions, Corporal Byce personally located two of them and silenced them with grenades. "As the patrol hurried across the dyke several grenades hurtled through the air towards them. Fortunately, they exploded harmlessly ... but they did serve to reveal the location of two more enemy soldiers .... He charged the German dug-out and into it hurled a 36 [the type classification] grenade," killing both the occupants.

Some six weeks later, in the Rhineland's Hochwald forest, Byce became one of only 162 Canadians to win the Distinguished Conduct Medal during the Second World War. His battalion was caught up in the most severe fighting it had known when Acting Sergeant Byce and the rest of his company, together with a troop of tanks, occupied a group of buildings. There they came under very heavy artillery and mortar fire, all four of the tanks were destroyed and every officer in the company became a casualty. Meanwhile, four enemy tanks were approaching.

> In the confusion and general disorder the enemy closed in upon C Company's position. Grimly the Lake Sups held on, the perimeter of their defences becoming smaller and smaller, and their escape corridor to the rear, narrower and narrower.... With ferocity and courage Byce, now commanding the remnants of C Company, fought as long as he could; then gathering what few men he was able to find about him he made his way back through the bullet-strewn escape alley.

Byce covered the retreat, sniping at the enemy infantry to prevent them from overrunning his men as they worked their way back.

> The magnificent courage and fighting spirit displayed by this N[on] C[ommissioned] O[fficer] when faced with almost insuperable odds are beyond all praise. His gallant stand, without adequate weapons and with a bare handful of men against hopeless odds will remain, for all time, an outstanding example to all ranks of the Regiment.

Very, very few Canadians won both the Distinguished Conduct Medal and the Military Medal.

Other aspects of Aboriginal service during the Second World War deserve special mention, if only because it was the obvious precursor of an important later development. The Pacific Coast Militia Rangers (PCMR), composed largely of native peoples, were formed in 1942, initially to provide a coast watching function in anticipation of possible Japanese landings. After Pearl Harbor the Japanese posed a distinct threat of raids, if not of full-fledged invasions, as occurred on the Aleutian islands of Kiska and Attu. As events transpired, the PCMR were never called upon to confront Japanese troops, or even report any landings; however, by early 1945 the Japanese were launching incendiary balloon missions against western North America in a vain attempt to set major forest fires. Rangers were successful on a number of occasions in reporting incoming balloons while still airborne, which gave the RCAF at least the possibility of shooting them down, and in obtaining portions of balloons and baskets that had landed to be analyzed by intelligence specialists. The PCMR were disbanded in 1945 with the Japanese surrender, but in 1947 they were at least part of the inspiration for the creation of an entirely new and different organization with a national mandate, styled the Canadian Rangers this time with an emphasis on the Canadian north, in response to the new concerns of the Cold War era.

The Second World War was the last of Canada's 'national' wars; future conflicts would be fought under the banner of the United Nations. "In Cree we say, *'Kahgee pohn noten took'* on Remembrance Day. It means 'the fighting has ended.'"

CHAPTER 7

THE LAST FIVE DECADES

The Korean War

In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, Aboriginal veterans returned home to a country which still treated them in most regards as second-class Canadians, with inferior citizenship status and legal rights assigned to those falling within the purview of the federal Indian Act legislation. Both Indian and Métis communities continued to face generally impoverished economic prospects, while the federal government's administration of Inuit affairs was beset with geographic complications compounded by bureaucratic inefficiencies. When the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed in 1948 (a process in which Canada played a major role) ironically many of its provisions simply did not apply to the Aboriginal peoples in Canada. However, after having fought to defend the fundamental freedoms, human rights and sovereignty of Allied Nations abroad, newly returned Aboriginal veterans, their families and communities, questioned with renewed vigour their inferior standing in Canadian society.

Prior to the Second World War, few, if any, Aboriginals had served in the Regular services - the Permanent Force of the Militia, the RCN or the RCAF. Even the Permanent Force, the largest of the three, was numerically too small to offer much opportunity. They could pick and choose and they mostly chose those of their own kind, leaving Natives to serve in the Non-Permanent Militia, if at all. However, a considerable but uncertain number of Aboriginals remained in Regular service after the Second World War, when the forces were much reduced from their wartime strengths but still substantially stronger than they had been in previous peacetime eras.

All this changed with the coming of the Cold War, perhaps most notably in the outbreak of the Korean conflict. Technically a United Nations "police action," but in practice a sour little war, its inception in June 1950 saw the return to service of hundreds of Aboriginal and Métis veterans of the Second World War. Many others, often their sons or younger brothers, too young to have enlisted in 1939-45, saw Korean service as a means of broadening their life experience and improving their economic circumstances.

The first Canadians to serve in the Korean theatre were naval personnel aboard the three destroyers that sailed for the Far Eastern theatre in July 1950. All three ships, HMCSs *Cayuga*, *Athabaskan*, and *Sioux* bore the names of Indian tribes, although this was perhaps more a matter of them belonging to the British Tribal class destroyers than a tribute to the part that Natives had played in the service of the Crown. Later in the war they were followed by HMCSs *Nootka, Iroquois, Huron and Haida.*

The Indian reaching the highest rank in the RCN during the Korean conflict was probably Chief Petty Officer, 2nd Class George Edward Jamieson, a member of the Six Nations Upper Cayuga Band. He had served through much of the Second World War, including time on convoy duty in the Battle of the Atlantic, remained in the peacetime navy, and was serving aboard HMCS *Iroquois* as Chief Torpedo Anti-Submarine instructor when that ship was assigned to Korean waters in 1952.

In the event, there was little but training to do in Jamieson's speciality; North Korea's minuscule navy had been entirely destroyed early in the war and, for the most part, RCN ships in Korean waters blockaded enemy ports, bombarded coastal defences and railway lines, and ensured the security of South Korean islands. *Iroquois* incurred the RCN's only battle damage of the campaign when it was hit by a shell fired from a coastal battery on 2 October 1952, in the course of her second tour. Three men died, two suffered serious wounds, and eight sustained minor injuries, but Chief Petty Officer Jamieson was not hurt. In 1955, while serving at Halifax, he was promoted to the rank of Chief Petty Officer, 1st Class - the navy's most senior non-commissioned rank.

Much younger than Ted Jamieson, Ronald Lowry, a Mohawk from the Bay of Quinte, ha joined the navy in 1949, just as the Cold War was becoming distinctly chilly.

> My friend wanted to join the RCN to learn a trade. I was a two-year plumber's apprentice in Oshawa [Ontario] and I went with him for company.... When we got there, I was asked if I wanted to try the tests. I was told it would be about a two-hour wait, so I tried them.... I passed and it just evolved from there.

In August 1951 Lowry was assigned to HMCS *Nootka*, back from her first Korean tour, and six months later he was still aboard when she sailed for a second tour in Far Eastern waters - the only Native in the crew at that time. He was a sonar technician, a skill for which (as had been the case with CPO Jamieson) there was little demand at that time and place. However, Lowry had also received some demolition training along the way, and he was detached for six months to work with South Korean and British marines in commando-style raids on North Korean islands and the mainland, blowing up bridges, railways and other strategic targets - a much more interesting and exciting task than manning a sonar set in an environment in which there were no enemy submarines. Lowry remained in the navy after the war, attaining the rank of petty officer; and three of his ten years of service were spent attached to the Royal Navy's submarine service. His was a naval family, if ever there was one. His wife, Joan, a Micmaq from Nova Scotia, also joined the RCN during the early1950s, and four of their five sons have since served in the navy.

The RCAF's contribution to the Korean conflict was very small - one transport squadron and some two dozen fighter pilots who served with the United States Air Force. None of the fighter pilots were Aboriginals and there is no record of any Native people being involved with the transport squadron. In terms of manpower, Canada's biggest contribution was the provision of an infantry brigade, but when the decision to send one was made, in August 1950, the existing Regular Force and Militia lacked the numbers to provide it as well as defend Canada. There was also the prospect looming ever larger that a Canadian commitment to the inchoate North Atlantic Treaty Organization would be required shortly in Europe. To solve the more immediate Korean problem the government decided to recruit a Special Force, roughly five thousand strong, built around a cadre of Second World War veterans. Just how many of those veterans were Indian or Métis is unknown. Late in 1950 agents of the Indian Affairs Branch, in keeping with past practice, were asked to keep track of the number of status Indians who enlisted in the Special Force.

> By March 1951, 73 names had been recorded. A final figure of participants was not reported: however, it is likely that several hundred Natives served on the battlefields

and also at sea in an area that had been known, in more peaceful times, as the Land of the Morning Calm.

However, it seems likely that the vast majority of those who enlisted, like Tom Prince, had already joined up in the four-and-a-half months between the creation of the Special Force and the issuance of the instruction to record the names of those who were enlisting.

Prince's Korean service would bring him another three campaign medals and leave him with eleven medals, perhaps the most decorated and probably best-known Indian to have worn a Canadian uniform. His Second World War experience served him well in Korea, but at the relatively young age of 35 he was already developing arthritis in his knees. Parachuting, especially, is not good for the knees and his arthritis was certainly compounded by cartilage damage from his parachuting days. He found it increasingly painful and difficult to endure the constant ups and downs of the steep-sided Korean hills. Nevertheless, he led some very successful patrols during his first tour with the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

His right knee was getting worse and provided an admirable excuse to assign him, despite his objections, to less arduous duties until the battalion's tour ended in October 1951. Then he was posted to Camp Borden, Ontario, where, despite his skill in fieldcraft, most of his time was spent on what were essentially administrative duties. Under those conditions his knee improved considerably and when he applied for a second tour of duty in Korea with the 3rd Battalion his application was approved. He returned to Korea a year after leaving it.

On 17 November 1952 Sergeant Prince led a reconnaissance patrol into no-man's-land, where a much stronger enemy patrol stumbled into them. In the ensuing fire-fight he was slightly wounded and three other Patricias were also wounded. Two had to be abandoned but despite his own injury Prince carried the third to the safety of the UN lines on his own back.

An armistice was signed in July 1953 and shortly afterwards 3 PPCLI rotated back to Canada. Prince was now walking with a noticeable limp and an examination revealed that his knee was much worse. Following an operation it was concluded that Tom Prince was unfit for further service and he was discharged with the appropriate disability pension. He then held a series of jobs in Winnipeg, entered into a common-law marriage and fathered five children. He died in 1977 at the relatively early age of 62, both hero and victim of his environment, having fought too many battles in his brief life.

Métis in Korea

When Manitoba had entered Confederation in 1870, Métis, unlike status Indians, were legally recognized as ordinary British subjects, with the full range of political, legal and civil rights due all British citizens resident in Canada at that time. However, their generally impoverished circumstances combined with racism and resentment from surrounding white communities more often than not had the net effect of consigning them to a marginal existence very similar to that experienced by Indians, except that they lacked the reserves of

Crown lands assigned to the latter. An adhesion to Treaty 3, signed in 1873, had allotted two tracts of land adjacent to Rainy Lake to a Métis community in Ontario's Lake of the Woods district, and in 1938, in Alberta, provincial legislation entitled "The Métis Betterment Act" provided for the allocation of provincial Crown lands as Métis reserves. In all, twelve such reserves were created, with three subsequently being rescinded in 1940, 1941 and 1956.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of Métis scraped a marginal living in unorganized poverty and many of their young men were glad to have an opportunity to enlist in the Special Force. As Maurice Blondeau, unable to find work as a motor mechanic, for which he had been properly trained, recorded, "I hitchhiked from Fort Qu'Appelle to Regina at six o'clock in the morning in 36-below weather to join the army." Blondeau had a Grade Nine education - more than many of his peers - and so ended up in the artillery, getting a shrapnel wound in his ankle that severely damaged ligaments. He stayed in the army until 1957, and eventually became executive director of the Saskatchewan Indian and Native Friendship Centre.

Ron Camponi had joined the army initially in 1942 when he was sixteen years old by forging his birth certificate. When the authorities discovered his true age he was discharged, but he re-enlisted as a boy soldier and served in Canada until the spring of 1946. Eight months later he re-enlisted once again, spent three years in Germany with Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) (2nd Armoured Regiment), and was still with that regiment when the Korean conflict began. He served in Korea with 'B' Squadron in 1952.

> Korea was something like the First World War. Everyone was dug in at the 38th Parallel and it was like the WW 1 trenches.... There was a lot of shelling and a lot of patrols. The infantry went on patrols, and we were dug in, in our tanks, as support. The shelling was really hard on the nerves, because we couldn't go anywhere; we couldn't move our tanks. We would register targets during the day and we would fire at night with the instruments, laying the shells on the targets.... It was a bloody war; people shooting at you and shelling you and people being killed.

To take one example, 'B' Squadron's War Diary for 13 August 1952 records that "the Chinese had a 'hate' on the tanks today. Sergeant Colwill's and Sergeant Falconer's tanks on Hill 159 were both hit by mortars [bombs] up to 105 mm in size.... At 2330 hrs Lieutenant Burch asked to have Sergeant Falconer's tank on 159 replaced as its [turret] traversing mechanism wouldn't work. Sergeant. R.J. Camponi took out a replacement before first light and brought back the damaged tank." In August 1952 the front cover of "The Legionary" magazine, the official monthly publication of the Royal Canadian Legion, featured a photograph of *three* Camponi brothers atop a tank in Korea.

Cultural and language differences made it especially difficult for Inuit to join the Forces, but one who did was Eddie Weetaltuk, born near East Main River, Quebec, who had been raised at residential schools in northern Quebec and Ontario. After working as cook and labourer in pulp and paper enterprises around Timmins, Ontario, and in various lumber camps in the upper Ottawa valley, he joined the Canadian Army Special Force under the name of Eddie Vital in 1952. He saw action with the PPCLI in Korea, and upon his return to

Canada took parachute and arctic warfare training with the Mobile Striking Force - the Regular Army cadre responsible for the defence of Canada. He subsequently served two tours of duty in West Germany before leaving the Forces to return to the Poste-de-la-Baleine (Great Whale River) of James Bay.

The Cold War

In Europe the Cold War was heating up. It would never reach the stage of open conflict that marked events in the Far East, but the threat posed by Stalin's Soviet Union and its Cominform allies (the Warsaw Pact from May 1955) seemed to be pointing in that direction. Canada, as a founding member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, created in April 1949, was asked to provide contingents for service in Europe - a brigade group of infantry and an air wing composed of eleven F-86 Sabre fighter squadrons.

An enlarged Regular Force could now supply the numbers required for the Korean commitment, now known as 25 Brigade, a Mobile Striking Force for home defence, and the necessary training cadres, but it was still far too small to provide another brigade group - 27 Brigade - for European service. This time the solution was to find the required numbers of infantry largely from Militia volunteers, recruiting two companies from each of fifteen regiments. They would be mobilized as 1st and 2nd Canadian Infantry, Rifle and Highland battalions and sign on for three years, although married men would have the option of being discharged after one year and single men after two. It was hoped that units would concentrate their most experienced volunteers in their new 'E' Companies which would move quickly to Valcartier, Quebec, where the composite battalions would be formed, while 'F' companies would go to other camps in Canada for further training, until they would be required to move overseas in their turn.

Thus were born six strange hybrid infantry battalions: 1st and 2nd Canadian Infantry Battalions, formed from The Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment, Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal, The Carleton and York Regiment, The Algonquin Regiment and The Loyal Edmonton Regiment; the 1st and 2nd Canadian Rifle Battalions, composed of men from The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, the Victoria Rifles of Canada, The Royal Hamilton Light Infantry, The Royal Winnipeg Rifles and The Regina Rifle Regiment; and 1st and 2nd Canadian Highland Battalions, from The Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) of Canada, The North Nova Scotia Highlanders, the 48th Highlanders of Canada, The Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, and The Canadian Scottish Regiment (Princess Mary's).

The same principles applied to the recruitment of artillery, armoured and combat support units, although the armoured component took the titles of Regular Force regiments - Lord Strathcona's Horse, and the Royal Canadian Dragoons (1st Armoured Regiment). This difficult and inefficient arrangement was maintained until the army reorganization of 1953, when the composite battalions were disbanded, and its men either absorbed into the Regular Force or released.

No figures seem to be available as to the number of Aboriginals who served in these composite battalions, but there can be little doubt that the number was significant, especially in those units such as the Algonquins, Winnipegs and Reginas, which recruited largely from rural and western areas. There were also a considerable number of Indians who enlisted in the Regular Force through the conventional channels, the Regular army having expanded to a strength of 45,000 men by 1955. In circulation from the mid-1960s through the early 70s, the *Indian News*, a monthly publication of Indian Affairs, recorded noteworthy items relative to the involvement of Natives in various aspects of Canada's national life, including military service. On a number of occasions these included brief profiles of men and women such as Leading Aircraftman K.N.B. Bannab, a photo-technician with the RCAF's 1 Wing at Marville, France; Sergeant John Martin from the Six Nations, of the 1st Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment, who, in April 1967, was serving with his battalion in Cyprus and who was the drum major for that unit's drum corps; Leading Aircraftwoman Geraldine Restoule, an Ojibwa from the Dokis Reserve, northern Ontario; and Sergeant Ernie Simpson (Okanagan, from Vinfield, British Columbia), RCEME (Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers), and Private Dolphus L'Hirondelle (Cree from Lac Ste. Anne, Alberta), RCASC (Royal Canadian Army Service Corps), who were both serving with 13 Transport Company in Edmonton, Alberta.

Post-Cold War

These, of course, were only the tip of the iceberg. Even in 2002, when the strength of the Canadian Forces - as the combined army, navy and air force became in February 1968 - has been greatly reduced, it is likely that there are about 1,300 Aboriginals (First Nations peoples from 1980) presently serving, not including those in the Canadian Rangers. However, that number is considerably less than the proportion of First Nations peoples in the Canadian population at large - 1.3 to 1.4 per cent, rather than 3 per cent.

In attempts to correct this imbalance, special recruiting efforts have been in place in one form or another since the early 1970s, starting with the Northern Native Entry Programme (NNEP), introduced in 1971 and designed to attract recruits from the far North and provide them with specialized indoctrination to the challenges of service life. NNEP's overall success rate was poor, however, and subsequent strategies have included the Bold Eagle Initiative for Native youth; the Sergeant Tommy Prince Army Training Initiative (STPATI); and the current Canadian Forces Aboriginal Entry Programme (CFAEP).

The Bold Eagle programme was founded in 1991 as a joint initiative of the Department of National Defence, Indian Affairs, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, and the Saskatchewan Indian Veteran's Association. Its goal was to build self-confidence and self-esteem among Native youth in the Prairie provinces by providing them with militia training within a context of First Nations cultural awareness, while apprising them of potential career opportunities through continued training with the Canadian Forces, Regular and Reserve. The STPATI is designed to increase the number of Aboriginals serving in the infantry and related combat arms trades, fields to which aboriginal tradition, culture, and often life experience, make them particularly well suited. This is accomplished by recruiting them in platoon strength and providing them with specialized indoctrination which takes into account Aboriginal views and values.

Finally, the current Canadian Forces Aboriginal Entry Programme (CFAEP) has improved upon deficiencies noted with the earlier NNEP. Whereas the NNEP focussed exclusively on recruiting young people from the more remote northern areas, the present

CFAEP has been expanded to accommodate recruits from all backgrounds and regions of the country. It consists of Pre-Recruit Training Course Phase I (Yellowknife, North West Territories) and Phase II (Farnham, Quebec) for participants applying from regions north or south of 60E North.

The Canadian Rangers

The task of the Canadian Rangers is to provide an operational military presence across the remote coastal and inland reaches of the Canadian North, including the High Arctic (Queen Elizabeth) Islands, the Arctic and Subarctic mainland, the northern regions of the respective provinces, and along the more northerly reaches of the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, primarily above the 50th parallel. Like the PCMR of an earlier era, the coast watching function of the Rangers is being revived. The local geographic and other traditional indigenous knowledge and expertise of Ranger Patrol Groups operating out of the hamlets located along the various sea lanes constituting the Northwest Passage will remain instrumental in providing early warning of any unauthorized incursions via these routes.

Rangers are enrolled as Canadian Forces reservists, receiving annual drill, service weapons training, and other support from Regular Force personnel, tasked with providing the Canadian Forces with early warning, territorial surveillance, ground search and rescue, and reconnaissance capabilities. The Rangers are organized into regional community-based units called Canadian Ranger Patrol Groups (CRPGs). With the exception of a few CRPGs in British Columbia and Newfoundland and Labrador, they are largely staffed by Aboriginal Canadians who elect their own non-commissioned officers from among their membership, and typically appoint elders from within the community to act as advisors relative to any concerns of a spiritual or morale nature.

Their dress is based on the belief that Rangers are well able to survive in their harsh environment by virtue of their normal clothing and equipment, so they are only issued minimal Canadian Forces clothing and equipment. Their uniform consists of a red sweatshirt, T-shirt, ball cap, brassard, vest and toque. They are equipped with a No.4 Lee Enfield rifle, and each patrol has a first aid kit, a Global Positioning System, a compass and a short-wave radio. They provide other equipment, such as skidoos and boats, themselves, and are eligible to receive compensation for its use. Typical of them is Sergeant Nick Mantla, of Wha'ti, in the Northwest Territories. "I'm very proud to be a Canadian Ranger. It's a way to serve my country as well as my people. It's important for me to pass on some of the northern knowledge .... to help with my skill in the bush, and to help with the military."

Much of the present work of the Rangers is premised upon their mastery of local geography and terrain, and the skills and lore of Arctic and Subarctic survival. They are organized into five Patrol Groups (CRPGs) as follows: 1 CRPG is located in the Far North with a total of 58 patrols in the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Alberta, Saskatchewan, northern British Columbia, and northern Manitoba; 2 CRPG covers northern Quebec with 19 patrols; 3 CRPG has nine patrols in northern Ontario; 4 CRPG is located on the Pacific coast and the interior of northern British Columbia, with 27 patrols; and 5 CRPG covers Newfoundland and Labrador with 28 patrols. A separate component programme, styled the Junior Canadian Rangers, provides activity for local youth, with an emphasis on

Northern Aboriginal culture and values, and wilderness and other survival skills, relevant to the particular region in question.

As with their predecessors of the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers, the Canadian Rangers' potential utility in providing an early warning and local intelligence capability across otherwise undefended or uninhabited regions is remarkable. Rangers were responsible in 1999 for raising the alert when an unidentified submarine (now believed to be French) surfaced in the waters of Cumberland Sound, off Baffin Bay. They have played a significant role in a number of search and rescue operations, perhaps most notably in the succouring of avalanche victims at Kangiqsualujjuaq, Quebec, on 1 January 1999, when nine inhabitants died and some 70 were injured out of a population of less than 700. The 28-member Ranger patrol from Kangiqsualujjuaq and more than 40 additional Rangers from 2 CRPG responded to the emergency.

For their efforts on that occasion, the Rangers received the Chief of Defence Staff Commendation from General Maurice Baril.

> The members of 2 CRPG have become known across the country for their efforts [said General Baril].... Were it not for the immediate response of the Canadian Rangers of 2 CRPG and their work throughout Nunavik, this disaster would surely have cost more lives. Their discipline and selflessness were of tremendous help in dealing with the aftermath of this sad event. The members of this Group are worthy of the proudest traditions of the CF.

Additionally, food and emergency material was provided from as far afield as the Coral Harbour patrol (Northwest Territories), whose members harvested and shipped fresh caribou meat to the disaster site.

Current concerns over effectively asserting Canadian sovereignty and maintaining security across the North are now largely connected with the phenomenon of global warming and climate change. It has been estimated that within the space of ten to twenty years, this may result in a year-round ice-free shipping season through the Northwest Passage, which Canada asserts are domestic internal waters, but which, at the level of international law, are deemed international straits. This enhanced ease of access may well facilitate the plunder of Canadian land and water-based resources by making navigation that much easier. In response, the number of Ranger Patrol Groups will be boosted by the year 2008, representing a rise in individual members from approximately 3,500 to 4,800.

On 14 February 2000, at Rideau Hall in Ottawa, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada and Commander-in-Chief of the Canadian Forces, was pleased to bestow upon selected members of the Canadian Rangers, the Canadian Forces Special Service Medal (SSM), with the special "RANGER" clasp, in recognition of their unique and outstanding contributions to the defence and security of the Canadian homeland. "You are the eyes and ears of the military in remote communities," she said.

> You support the military and help protect our sovereignty.... Your skills, your knowledge, your know-how, are unparalleled.... You, the Canadian Rangers, have made great contributions to the north - and you continue to do so - and to our journey as fellow Canadians. I thank you.

CONCLUSION

From the 1950's onward, new generations of Aboriginal Canadians found themselves donning uniform and bearing arms in support of Canada's international commitments. In many instances, Aboriginal participation in the Canadian military during the twentieth century has become something of a family tradition spanning several generations. Their participation in UN and other international missions worldwide demonstrates globally the diversity of our Canadian society at home.

It may be noted very briefly here that the range of individual motivations leading Aboriginal persons to enlist in the twentieth century largely conformed with those of the Canadian mainstream: economic necessity, perceived opportunities for adventure, a chance to flee unsatisfactory domestic circumstances at home, etc. However, it should be borne in mind that in the case of First Nation peoples collectively, and particularly status Indians, the outcomes of their service had an aggregate effect that far outweighed the implications of their individual experience: military service during wartime had the net effect of renewing their end of the bargain within the historic treaty relationship with the Crown, thus providing them as a group with a greatly increased moral claim to more equitable treatment within Canadian society generally. The circumstances of First Nations' veterans have been absolutely unique, insofar as even though they, their families and communities, have been denied the full rights and benefits of Canadian citizenship at home, they have nevertheless been at the very forefront in fulfilling abroad what is arguably that single most onerous and profound obligation of citizenship - bearing arms against the nation's enemies.

Certain questions come repeatedly to the fore in considering the participation of Aboriginal peoples in Canadian military endeavours. Why, for instance, did Indian, Inuit and Métis Canadians volunteer for service at all during the two World Wars and the Korean Conflict? At what point historically did they apparently come to perceive the political and other aspirations of mainstream Canadian society as coinciding with their own? After all, those Natives from eastern Canada who, in the previous century, had formed the backbone of the Red River voyageur contingent, were engaged in an undertaking whose ultimate objective was the suppression by armed force of another Aboriginal (i.e. Métis) population. A year later, however, those same Métis were being relied upon by Dominion officials to provide the nucleus of a local militia to repel an anticipated Fenian invasion. Historically have Aboriginals' motivations in volunteering for military service been any different from other Canadians? If so, in what ways? What were they hoping to achieve? What other options did they have? What did they lose in so doing? Questions like these should be kept in mind while reflecting upon the military service of all Aboriginal Peoples.

On National Aboriginal Day, 21 June 2001, the Governor General presided at the unveiling of the National Aboriginal Veteran's Monument in Ottawa. In her address, she spoke of the proud tradition of Native military service in Canada, stretching to Joseph Brant during the Seven Years War and Tecumseh during the War of 1812.

On the Monument itself is the ultimate tribute to Aboriginal Canadians.

They were Allies to the Crown and faithful to the traditions of their forefathers.

They served with honour and distinction in all branches of the Service
And in every rank and appointment from Private to Brigadier.

They fought overseas to defend the sovereignty and liberty of allied nations
In addition to supporting the cause at home.

Hundreds from across Canada gave fully of their lives
So that all Canadians might know peace and inherit freedom.

Their dedication continues in Peacekeeping operations in far away lands.